



82 years of service to the nation

The Assam Tribune

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIBRUGARH

CHANAKYA IAS ACADEMY
 Join Online Live Classes for **IAS/ACS**
 Batch Date: 10th May, 2020
 For 3 days Free Online Demo Classes
 Call : 8811092481

RN-1127/57 TECH/GH – 103/2018-2020, VOL. 82, NO. 109

www.assamtribune.com



ePaper app for The Assam Tribune

Pages 12 Price: ₹ 6.00

GUWAHATI, FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2020

p2 Extra USD 30-mn China grant for WHO

p5 IndianOil assures consumers of LPG home delivery

p11 Thunderstorm wreaks havoc in Dibrugarh

NEWS Capsule

DA put on hold

NEW DELHI, April 23: The Finance Ministry on Thursday decided to put on hold increment in DA for 50 lakh Central government employees and 61 lakh pensioners till June 2021 due to the COVID-19 crisis. "The additional instalment of DA and DR due from July 1, 2020, and January 1, 2021, shall also not be paid," sources said. - PTI

■ Also see page 9

EC initiative

NEW DELHI, April 23: The Election Commission has taken note of changes made by South Korea in procedures while holding its parliamentary polls amid the coronavirus outbreak and said it will consider modifications as required and suited to the Indian context when polls need to be held in such pandemic environment. - PTI

■ Also see page 3

HS promotion

GUWAHATI, April 23: The Assam Higher Secondary Education Council has confirmed promotion of HS first year students to HS final year in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. The council said HS first year students of academic year 2019-20, who had filled online forms, would be promoted to the next class as a special case. - Staff Reporter

Ambubachi

GUWAHATI, April 23: The Ambubachi Mela at Kamakhya temple, scheduled from June 22, will be observed only through traditional religious rituals and no pilgrims, sadhus and sanyasis should visit the shrine during the mela, the temple committee stated in a press release. - Staff Reporter

■ Also see page 5

Suspended

GUWAHATI, April 23: Bhupendra Rawat, an SI (probation) of Assam Police posted in Misamari PS in Sonitpur district was placed under suspension for uploading an unethical video of punishment to common people during lockdown in social media. - Staff Reporter

JOCOSERIOUS



Sir, I think with the masks on, there is no need to indulge in underhand dealings!

Poor shifting livelihood amid lockdown

SIVASISH THAKUR

GUWAHATI, April 23: The extended lockdown has hit the poor severely, choking off their means of day-to-day livelihood, but undeterred by the misfortune, many have opted for different occupations, especially vending activities.

Taslim Ali, a city-based mason who was left without a job by the lockdown has turned to selling fish to make both ends meet.

"For more than two weeks I did nothing but when I realised that the shutdown was going to be extended I started to look for some work. I had some acquaintances among the fish sellers and when sale of fish and poultry was resumed, I found myself occupied again," Ali, who originally hails from Goalpara, told *The Assam Tribune*.

Ali is happy that he is earning something even during the lockdown that has



lockdown caught us unawares, obliterating my chances to join my family at Bongaigaon. For people like us who survive on day-to-day earnings, this has been a terrible situation. Once the sale of fruits was allowed, I found out a way to bring fruits from the wholesalers and sell those at a particular point and also across localities sometimes. It is far better than sitting idle," he said.

It is not just their pragmatism and resilience but also their sense of self-esteem that has helped these people to survive the shutdown.

After he found himself jobless, Rahmat Ismail, who used to sell cheap stationery ware by the roadside, has volunteered to do manual labour in households so that he can survive on his own earnings rather than relying on alms provided by the government.

■ Also see page 6



Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal reviewing the COVID-19 situation, at Sadiya on Thursday. - UB Photos (Report on Page 11)

Medical college hospitals to open for general patients

Rapid tests for COVID-19 begins

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 23: Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today said that after the final nod from ICMR, the State health department started rapid antibody tests for COVID-19 in the State starting from Spanish Garden in the city - a containment zone. Centre has given 9,600 rapid antibody test kits to the State.

Some hundred tests were conducted at the housing complex. Sources said one representative from each apartment was made to undergo the test. "The test is non-confirmatory yet useful for surveillance. It

gives results in 15 minutes," Sarma said.

"If all test results are negative, we might consider lifting of the containment zone tag of the complex in the next 48 hours," he said. Rapid test will also be conducted at the city's Aathgaon Kabarsthan Masjid containment zone in a day or two.

Meanwhile, the medical colleges and district hospitals will open for general patients from tomorrow. They were kept aside for COVID-19 treatment, and other patients redirected to private hospitals.

Rapid testing kits have been made available to the

government hospitals.

"The doctors will conduct test on suspected patients, which will be helpful in clearing their doubts. In the recent past, doctors have been apprehensive of treating patients fearing COVID 19 infection," the minister said.

In case a person who tested negative in the rapid kit shows symptoms later, RT-PCR test will be conducted for confirmation. People who show positive for COVID-19 in the rapid tests will also have to undergo the RT-PCR test for confirmation, sources said.

■ Also see page 6

Himanta seeks views from VCs to minimise academic loss

RITURAJ BORTHAKUR

GUWAHATI, April 23: Amid doubts over regularity of online classes in colleges and universities, Education Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today held a video conference with 17 vice chancellors to deliberate on measures to ensure that the academic year is not lost, and to seek ideas

and innovations for the learning and teaching framework.

Official sources told *The Assam Tribune* that the vice chancellors have been asked to submit their views and recommendations within three days, based on which the government will come up with some measures by May 3 or May 4.

While the government had

suggested online classes for students, it is learnt that a majority of the colleges and universities have either not introduced it or have been extremely irregular.

Sources said even at Gauhati University, many of the departments have just uploaded study materials in 'Google Classroom'. No online classes are being conducted. Students who are being engaged in online classes are also experiencing internet connectivity issues.

■ Also see page 6

Maintain DISTANCE
Save SOCIETY

■ Also see page 6

New COVID-19 case in Dhubri

State count rises to 35

CORRESPONDENT

DHUBRI, April 23: One Matur Rahman Tarafdar of Kathaldi Part-III village under Bilasipara police station was today tested positive for COVID-19, taking the total number of infected cases in Assam to 35.

The 62-year-old attended the religious congregation at Athgaon Masjid in Guwahati recently. This is the third COVID-19 positive case of

Dhubri district related to the Guwahati event and overall the fifth positive case in the district.

According to district administration, Tarafdar along with ten other persons went to Fakiragram from Bilasipara on March 11 for their onward journey towards Guwahati. They arrived Kamakhya, Guwahati by train to visit Athgaon Kabarsthan Masjid where they stayed for the night.

The next day, Tarafdar and his colleagues attended namaz at Athgaon Masjid where they came in contact with Al Haz Jamal Uddin, who had attended the Nizamuddin Tablighi Jamaat congregation. Tarafdar also met Rahim Uddin at the mosque. Both Jamal Uddin and Rahim Uddin were later tested positive for COVID-19.

After taking part in the Athgaon Masjid congregation, Tarafdar and his associates came back to Bilasipara by train. On March 14, Tarafdar again met with Jamal Uddin and Rahim Uddin at the Bilasipara Jame Masjid. He stayed at home from March 15 to April 6 after which he was put in quarantine at Borakanda Pupils Academy.

COVID-19 status in INDIA	
Confirmed cases	21,700
Cured/Discharged	4,325
Death	686
Figures include foreign nationals As on 23/04/2020 at 5 pm	
Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare	

SEE PAGE 6

Arnab Goswami's car attacked in Mumbai, 2 held

MUMBAI/DELHI, April 23: Two motorcycle-borne persons allegedly attacked journalist Arnab Goswami's car in Mumbai and tried to break its glass window while he and his wife were on their way home in the early hours of Thursday, police said.



alleged attack, Goswami said he was told by his security guards that the attackers were allegedly Youth Congress workers. However, there was no confirmation of the same by either police or the youth outfit.

The incident took place on the Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, while Goswami was returning from a studio located in Bombay Dyeing Complex in Lower Parel area, a police official said. The attackers overtook Goswami's car, stopped it and one of them allegedly tried to break the vehicle's glass window by repeatedly hitting it with his hands, the official said.

The attackers were carrying a bottle of ink which they threw on his car, the official said. Goswami's security guards, who were behind in another car, caught hold of the two persons and handed them over to the N M Joshi Marg Police, he added. Both the attackers have been arrested, he added.

Goswami has faced flak over his remarks aimed at Sonia Gandhi during a discussion on the Palghar incident in which three persons, including two sadhus, were lynched.

In Delhi, BJP leaders, including party president J P Nadda, condemned the alleged attack on Goswami and targeted the Congress over the incident.

In a video posted after the

SEE PAGE 6

Have cut transmission, minimised spread: Centre

NEW DELHI, April 23: The government said on Thursday that it has been able to "cut coronavirus transmission", minimise its spread and increase the doubling time of COVID-19 cases in the country during the 30-day period of the nationwide lockdown.

As on March 23, nearly 15,000 tests were done across the country and by April 22 more than 5 lakh tests were conducted, which is about "33 times in 30 days", he said, adding, "But we are conscious of the fact that this is not enough and we have to continuously ramp up testing in the country and we will do that."

While asserting that the growth of coronavirus cases in the country has been more or less linear and not exponential, it also said testing has been ramped up consistently.

Of the empowered groups formed to suggest measures to ramp up healthcare, put the economy back on track and reduce misery of people once the lockdown is lifted, the Group Two is tasked with coordinating availability of hospitals, isolation and quarantine facilities, disease surveillance, testing and critical care training.

Addressing a daily press conference on the COVID-19 situation in the country, C K Mishra, the chairman of Empowered Group Two, said, "One crucial weapon we employed during the 30-day lockdown period is RT-PCR test to ascertain if one has contracted the disease or not."

■ Also see page 6

■ Also see page 6

Prompt steps helped Sikkim in having zero COVID-19 case

R DUTTA CHOUDHURY

GUWAHATI, April 23: Despite being a favourite tourist destination, Sikkim does not have a single coronavirus case till date and the main reason for it is the fact that the State Government started the fight against the disease much before the Central Government started issuing advisories in this regard. The Government of Sikkim is also taking steps to boost the rural economy during the lockdown period.

Talking to *The Assam Tribune*, SD Dhakal, who is the secretary to the Sikkim

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang said that the State Government started taking

initiatives to fight the disease even before the Centre started issuing instructions and so

far, the State has not recorded even a single case of coronavirus.



World corona count

- More than 2,658,000 positive cases registered around the globe
- Death toll from the pandemic 185,434
- At least 722,000 patients recovered
- Now the pandemic epicentre, the US has 843,937 infections and 46,851 deaths
- Spain (213,024 infections, 22,157 deaths) and Italy (187,327 infections, 25,085 deaths) follow the US

Data till 8 pm on Thursday - JHU

He said that the Chief Minister reviewed the situation way back on March 2 and instructions were issued to the tourists to leave the State and on March 4, the foreign tourists and trekkers, who were in Sikkim were asked to leave. All the places of tourist attractions were closed on March 4 to prevent gathering of people and all the hotels, restaurants, cinema halls, schools and colleges etc were closed from March 17.

■ Also see page 6

Around the WORLD



Deckhand Gerard Bakulikira, wears a Romware COVID Radius digital bracelet, which flashes red when he is too close to someone else, as he walks on deck of a tugboat in the Port of Antwerp, Belgium on Wednesday. Europe's second-biggest port is readying to test an electronic device aimed at helping people respect social distancing as the spread of the coronavirus eases and they return to work. From next month, two teams of workers at the Belgian port of Antwerp will be wearing chunky plastic bracelets that vibrate and flash lights when they get too close to each other. - AP/PTI

Richard Gere, Alejandra Silva welcome second child

LONDON, April 23: Hollywood star Richard Gere and his wife, activist Alejandra Silva have become parents to their second child, a boy. According to Spanish magazine *Hola!*, the couple welcomed another son and are spending time on their ranch on Pound Ridge, outside New York. The date of birth of the newborn is unknown. Gere, 70, and Silva, 37, already share another son Alexander, who was born early last year. The veteran actor also has son Homer, 20 with ex-wife, actor Carey Lowell, while Silva has a seven-year-old son with former husband Govind Friedland. Gere and Silva had secretly wed in April 2018 after more than three years of dating. - PTI

Lanka declines foreign troops aid

COLOMBO, April 23: Sri Lanka has no plans to have foreign troops deployed in the country to combat the coronavirus as the island nation's military and police have shown their capabilities in tackling the pandemic, according to Defence Secretary Kamal Gunaratne. Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, Gunaratne said the Sri Lankan forces were well-prepared to tackle all the challenges posed by the COVID-19. "Our military has already shown their expertise and professionalism in handling the emergency situation created under the coronavirus threat," Gunaratne said. - PTI

Iran Guard commander threatens US Navy after Trump tweet

TEHRAN, April 23: The leader of Iran's Revolutionary Guard warned on Thursday he ordered his forces to potentially target the US Navy after President Donald Trump's tweet a day earlier threatening to sink Iranian vessels.

Iran separately summoned the Swiss ambassador, who looks out for America's interests in the country, to complain about Trump's threat coming amid months of escalating attacks between the two countries.

While the coronavirus pandemic temporarily paused those tensions, Iran has since begun pushing back against the Trump administration's maximum pressure policy both militarily and diplomatically. The Guard also launched Iran's first military satellite on Wednesday, unveiling a previously secret space programme.

Speaking to state television

on Thursday, Guard Gen Hossein Salami warned his forces "will answer any action by a decisive, effective and quick counteraction." "We have ordered our naval units at sea that if any warships or military units from the naval force of America's terrorist army wants to jeopardise our commercial vessels or our combat vessels, they must target those (American) warships or naval units," Salami said.

The latest dispute comes after the US Navy said last week that 11 Guard naval gunboats had carried out "dangerous and harassing approaches" to American Navy and Coast Guard vessels in the Persian Gulf. The Americans said they used a variety of non-lethal means to warn off the Iranian boats, and they eventually left. Iran, meanwhile, accused the US of sparking the incident, without offering evi-

dence.

Iran has had tense encounters at sea for years with the US Navy in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 per cent of all oil passes. The US has patrolled the area to protect global shipping for decades, something Iran describes as akin to it patrolling the Gulf of Mexico.

Trump on Wednesday, facing a collapsing global energy market and the pandemic at home amid his re-election campaign, tweeted out a warning to Iran that he ordered the Navy to "shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea."

"We don't want their gunboats surrounding our boats, and traveling around our boats and having a good time," Trump told reporters on Wednesday evening at the White House, said Trump. - PTI

Indians among worst-affected minority groups in England

LONDON, April 23: People of Indian origin in the UK have emerged as being among the worst-affected minority groups in the coronavirus pandemic, according to a snapshot of official data on the COVID-19 deaths in hospitals across England.

Figures released this week by the National Health Service (NHS) England show that of the 13,918 patients who died in hospitals till April 17 after testing positive for the novel coronavirus, 16.2 per cent were of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background, with the number of deaths

under the category at 2,252.

Those identifying with Indian ethnicity made up the largest chunk under the ethnicity breakdown of data, at around 3 per cent of the overall death toll, adding up to 420 deaths. This was followed by Caribbeans as the second-largest ethnic group affected in the COVID-19 death toll at 2.9 per cent (407 deaths), followed by Pakistanis at 2.1 per cent (287 deaths).

The data, only a limited snapshot of the UK-wide COVID-19 fatalities from the deadly virus, follows the British government's announce-

ment of a review into the coronavirus death toll disparity among the BAME population.

"We have seen, both across the population as a whole but in those who work in the NHS, a much higher proportion who've died from minority backgrounds and that really worries me," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock while launching the review last week.

The proportion of deaths among BAME groups is much higher compared to their roughly 13 per cent make-up of the total population. - PTI

Extra USD 30-mn China grant for WHO

BEIJING, April 23: Cash-rich China on Thursday announced an additional USD 30 million grant to the World Health Organisation to support its global fight against the deadly coronavirus, days after Beijing expressed "serious concern" over President Donald Trump's decision to freeze US' funding for the UN health agency over its handling of the COVID-19 crisis.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang made the announcement at a media briefing here. The grant will be in addition to the USD 20 million provided by China, the world's second-largest economy, earlier to the WHO.

"China has decided to donate another USD 30 million in cash to the WHO in addition to the USD 20 million cash donation to support the global fight against COVID-19 to help strengthen developing countries health systems," Geng said. He clarified that the additional USD 30-million funding

was "aimed to COVID-19 response and supporting the health systems of developing countries."

"This is a different thing from the membership dues paid by China," he said.

China hinted at stepping up its monetary contribution to the UN health agency on April 15. Beijing's response came a day after Trump announced to put a "very powerful" hold on US' funding to the WHO, accusing the UN agency of being "very China-centric" and criticising it for having "missed the call" in its response to the coronavirus pandemic. The US is the largest donor to the Geneva-based WHO.

"American taxpayers provide between USD 400 mn and USD 500 mn per year to the WHO; in contrast China contributes roughly USD 40 million a year, even less. As the organisation's leading sponsor; the United States has a duty to insist on full accountability," he said. - PTI

Bangla shutdown till May 5 as toll touches 127

DHAKA, April 23: Bangladesh has decided to extend the nationwide COVID-19 shutdown for 10 more days until May 5 amid warnings of heightening risks of coronavirus infections in the country, including among doctors and healthcare workers.

To curb the spread of the novel coronavirus, the government initially declared a general holiday on March 26 for 10 days. Later, that was gradually extended till April 25 as the country kept seeing a rise in the number of cases and deaths from COVID-19.

"The government will extend the nationwide shutdown until May 5," a Cabinet division spokesman told PTI as healthcare officials said that the pandemic has spread to the country's 58 of 64 administrative districts, indicating worsening situation of community level infections. - PTI



The joint plaintiffs Andreas Schulz, from left, Khubaib-Ali Mohammed, Feras Fayyad and Mohammad Alshaar talk to journalists after the first day's trial in Koblenz, Germany on Thursday. Two former members of Syria's secret police go on trial on Thursday in Germany accused of crimes against humanity for their role in a government-run detention centre where large numbers of Opposition protesters were tortured. - AP/PTI

Beijing denies US permission to probe Covid-19 origin

WASHINGTON, April 23: Beijing has denied permission to American scientists to visit Wuhan Institute of Virology or any other part of China to investigate the origin of the novel coronavirus.

US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo revealed this on Wednesday while speaking to Fox News about why greater transparency from the Xi Jinping government was required.

"Even today, the Chinese government hasn't permitted American scientists to go into China, to go into not only the Wuhan lab but wherever it needs to go to learn about this virus, to learn about its origins," Pompeo told the news channel.

Reiterating that the Trump administration has information about it, he said, "Look, we know where it began, but we need to fig-

ure this out. There's an on-going pandemic. We still don't have the transparency and openness we need in China."

"It is the World Health Organisation's (WHO) responsibility to achieve that transparency. They're not doing it. They need to be held accountable," Pompeo said adding, that it has been "great to see other countries around the world to begin to recognize the WHO failures as well."

The US Secretary of State said the WHO needs structural changes including stepping down of its chief Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "Or even more than that. It may be the case that the United States can never return to underwriting, having US taxpayer dollars go to the WHO. We may need to be have even bolder change than that," he said. - IANS

Bats, coronaviruses evolving together for millions of years: study

WASHINGTON, April 23: Different groups of bats have their own unique strains of coronavirus, a family that includes the COVID-19 causing virus, according to a study which reveals that the flying mammal and coronaviruses have been evolving together for millions of years.

The study, published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, noted that while bats do a lot of good for the world such as pollinating plants, eating disease-carrying insects, and dispersing seeds of tropical forest trees, they are also natural carriers of coronaviruses.

To understand this diverse family of viruses, scientists, including those from Chicago's Field Museum in the US, compared the different kinds of coronaviruses living in 36 bat species from the western Indian Ocean and nearby areas of Africa.

"We found that there's a deep evolutionary history between bats and coronaviruses," said study co-author Steve Goodman from Chicago's Field Museum.

"Developing a better understanding of how coronaviruses evolved can help us build public health programmes in the future," Goodman said.

According to the researchers, there are a vast number of types of different coronaviruses, potentially as many as bat species, and most of them are unknown to be transferred to humans and pose no known threat.

The coronaviruses carried by the bats part of the study are different from the one behind COVID-19, the scientists cautioned, adding that learning about these viruses in bats can help better understand the pandemic causing virus. - PTI



Newborn ring-tailed lemurs play inside the shuttered Attica Zoological Park, in Spata, east of Athens on Thursday. Five lemurs were born after the site was closed to the public as part of health restrictions for the new coronavirus pandemic. The government is planning next week to ease restrictions against the COVID-19 which has so far help keep infection rates low in Greece. - AP/PTI

Two cats in US are first pets to test positive

NEW YORK, April 23: Two cats in New York State have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, marking the first confirmed case of the COVID-19 infection in pets in the US, according to health authorities.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) said on Wednesday that the two cats, who live in separate areas of New York state, have become the first pets in the country to test positive for coronavirus.

"These are the first pets in the United States to test positive," the two agencies said in a joint statement. The agencies said that both pets had mild respiratory illness and are expected to make a full recovery. COVID-19 infections have been reported in very few animals worldwide and mostly in those that had close contact with a person with COVID-19.

Even as public health officials are still learning about the virus, there is no evidence that pets play a role in spreading coronavirus to humans in the United States. "Therefore, there is no justification in taking measures against companion animals that may compromise their welfare. Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals, including pets, could be affected," the statement said.

Routine testing of animals is not recommended at this time, it said, adding that if other animals are confirmed positive for coronavirus in the country, the USDA will post the findings.

"State animal health and public health officials will take the lead in making determinations about whether animals should be tested for SARS-CoV-2," the agencies said, using the virus's official name "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2".

SITUATION VACANT

Banking HR firm looking for Consultancy, Institute to provide candidates. Call: 9401008092, What's app: 9050791704. SV/P/AC000032/1

Required retired persons & Entrepreneurs for MNC. Earning Rs. 45,000/-. Work from home. Contact : 96781-80856. SV/P/AC000035/8

TUITION

Highly experienced home Tutor for (XI-XII) Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics. Conception #99573-06841. Tuition/P/AC000037/29

Online Physics class for NEET & Boards by exp. Kota Faculty. Contact : 69009-77274. Tuition/P/AC000022/8

NURSING

We provide Nurses, Patient Care, Old Age Care, Baby Care. 8472855108, 91011-04088. Nursing/P/AC000033/3

ASTROLOGY

Mata Mahakali Astrologer A to Z problem solution on phone Love affairs, Husband Wife dispute, Court case, Business enemy, Family problem, Love marriage, Real estate problem call us for immediate solution. Give a new look to your life. Call: 9636010099. Astro/P/AC000031/10

GODOWN

2500 to 98,000 sq. ft Industrial Shed/Warehouse, Godown at Khanapara, Beltola, Lokhra, Amingaon, Changsari, Mirza. 9435403986. Godown/P/AC006815/1

For pick up of Classified Advertisements from your doorstep ...

IN MEMORIAM



Late Dipannita Sarmah

Born: 8th November, 1975
Death: 24th April, 2004
The Fragrance of your memories linger in our heart each and every moment. Let your soul rest in peace heavenly abode.

All members of:
Family and relatives
Dipannita Memorial Education Trust
Dipannita Academy (A Junior College of Sc. Com. & Arts)
Dipannita Complex.

CD/InMemo/P/SP000011/1

OBITUARY



Late Ramendra Sarkar

(Proprietor of M/s Saptarshi Industries)
Born : 17.01.1956
Died : 20.04.2020

With a heavy heart, we bid adieu to our beloved Husband/Uncle as he left for his heavenly abode, on 20.04.2020 at 03.00 pm. May his soul rest in peace.

Leaving behind beloved Smt. Rina Sarkar (Wife) & Family Members

CD/Obituary/P/SP000010/1



People wait to receive food assistance ahead of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown to help contain the spread of the coronavirus in Lahore, Pakistan on Thursday. Ramadan begins with the new Moon later this week as Muslims all around the world are trying to work out how to maintain the many cherished rituals of Islam's holiest month amid the coronavirus pandemic. - AP/PTI

Ph: 97060-43680 or 70860-44611

CIVIL ENGINEERING WORK
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. LMG/Engg/20 of 2020: date: 21-04-2020. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Brief Description of Item: Recoupment of supply of monsoon reserve stock of boulder, unscreened shingle etc. and protection work at breach prone area under the jurisdiction of DEN/Lumding. Tender Value: ₹. 11,32,726.87; Earnest Money: ₹.05,700.00. E-tenders will be closed on 25-05-2020 and Opened on 26-05-2020. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs of 25-05-2020 in website www.ireps.gov.in. DRM/Works, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF FILTER PLANTS
E-Tender Notice No.: 03-ENGG-RNY-2020-21 dated 21-04-2020. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. 1. Brief Description of Item: Maintenance and Operation of filter plants for water supply at Khandikar, Goreswar, Khoirbari, Tangla (2 plants), Harisinga, Udalguri, Rowta Bagan, Majbat (2 plants), Dhekiajuli Road, New Misamari, Rangapara North (4 plants), Bindukuri, Dekargaon, Tezpur, Balipara, Dhalai, Nizchatia, Vishwanath Charali, Nizbarganj, Helem, Gohpur, Harmuti, Gumto, Naharlagun, North Lakhimpur (2 plants), Lilabari, Gogamukh, Bordolani, Dhemaji, Sripani, Silapathar, Archipathar Halt, Simen Chapari, Telam, Laimekuri & Murkengselek by engaging skilled, semi-skilled labour (Total = 42 plants) under the jurisdiction of Sr DEN/III/Rangiya (for two years). Tender Value: ₹.25,95,001.60. Earnest Money: ₹.2,77,500/-. Cost of Tender Document: ₹.10,000/-. Date of closing of E-tender: 13-05-2020 at 13.00 hrs. & opening of Tender: 15.00 hrs. of 13-05-2020 at DRM (W), Rangiya. For details please visit www.ireps.gov.in. DRM (W), Rangiya
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers With A Smile"

Plasma therapy: Challenge is to convince people to donate blood, say officials

MUMBAI, April 23: Even as the Indian Council of Medical Research has allowed plasma therapy for COVID-19 patients in Mumbai on an experimental basis, the challenge is to convince people to donate blood for it, officials said on Thursday.

Also, extracting plasma from

blood, its testing and then administering it to a patient is a complicated procedure and not as simple as it may appear on paper, they said.

"The therapy involves extraction of plasma from the blood of recovered COVID-19 patients. These people are expected to have good amount of anti-bodies, which, by

way of plasma, will be administered to COVID-19 patients," a senior epidemiologist from the Maharashtra health department said.

The dose of plasma along with the ongoing medication will help the patient to build immunity as well as recover faster from the infection, he said.

However, a Mumbai civic official said, till Tuesday only a couple of persons came forward to donate blood for the therapy, even as nearly 500 people have so far been discharged in the city after recovering from the disease.

"We need to convince them to come forward and help others. Af-

ter recovering, people have to remain in 14-day mandatory home quarantine from the date of discharge. Hence, it is difficult to collect their blood sample," he said, adding that medically also it is not advisable.

The official said plasma therapy is a complicated procedure and not

as simple as it may appear on paper. "The extraction of plasma, and its testing is crucial before treating others. It should also have sufficient anti-bodies," he said.

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Wednesday said the State has received permission from the Indian Council of Medical

Research to carry out plasma therapy on COVID-19 patients in Mumbai on an experimental basis.

"The plasma of those who have recovered from coronavirus infection has some antibodies. If these people's plasma is used with utmost precaution, it has proven to be useful," he said. - PTI

Shahi imams appeal to Muslims to offer prayers at home during Ramzan

NEW DELHI, April 23: Shahi imams of Jama Masjid and Fatehpuri Masjid in the city have appealed to Muslims to offer namaz during the holy month of Ramzan at home and follow lockdown guidelines to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the shahi imam of Jama Masjid, in a video message asked people not to venture outside unnecessarily and remain indoors during Ramzan for prayers.

"Two days later auspicious Ramzan is commencing. Namaz and Tarabi (ritual prayer) should be offered at home. Care should be taken that not more than three-four people read Tarabi because large numbers can be harmful

for the families and the society in view of the pandemic," Bukhari said.

The holy month of Ramzan marked by fasting by followers of Islam is expected to start from Saturday as per the lunar calendar.

Shahi Imam of Fatehpuri Masjid Mufti Mukarram Ahmed said those who are under quarantine and unable to observe roza (fast) can compensate for it through 'Qaza'. Such persons can observe fast later on, he said.

Ahmed urged authorities to make necessary arrangements so that people in Muslim-dominated areas could go out in the evenings and early mornings to buy food items to break fasts

during Ramzan.

"Lockdown has been imposed due to coronavirus and people have been restricted to their homes. But during Ramzan, authorities should allow shops and vendors in Muslim areas so those observing 'Roza' could buy food for iftari and sehri," he said.

The mosques in Delhi are shut due to the nationwide lockdown imposed to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The Delhi Waqf Board that administers over 200 masjids in the city has already issued an advisory for imams regarding Ramzan. It has asked imams to disseminate official guidelines for coronavirus containment through loudspeakers. - PTI

Kerala reports 10 new COVID-19 cases

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, April 23: Ten fresh COVID-19 cases were reported in Kerala on Thursday, taking the total active cases in the State to 129 with 23,000 people under observation. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said.

Four of the new cases were reported from the high range Idukki district, two each from Kozhikode and Kottayam and one case each from Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam, he said in his daily media briefing on the disease situation.

Kottayam, declared a green zone on Tuesday with no new cases in 14 days, reported one case each in the past two days.

Two cases reported on Thursday had foreign travel history, four had returned from neighbouring States and others were contacts of those already infected, Vijayan said.

The total COVID-19 cases in the State is 447, Vijayan said adding 23,000 people are under observation, most of them under home quarantine. - PTI

Newlywed Punjabi couple feted by cops

PHAGWARA, April 23: A newlywed couple had a surprise gift for them by policemen in Punjab's Phagwara city. The police personnel arranged a cake for the newlyweds for religiously observing the guidelines of lockdown during their marriage ceremony.

In the presence of five family members from each side, Sukhwinder Singh Dhaliwal and Khushbir Kaur got married at a gurudwara here on Wednesday.

When the bride and bridegroom reached near Satnam-pura after getting married, they were in for a pleasant surprise as police officers, led by SHO Usha Rani, had arranged a cake outside the police station for the couple. - PTI

EC takes note of how South Korea held polls amid coronavirus outbreak

NEW DELHI, April 23: The Election Commission has taken note of changes made by South Korea in procedures while holding its parliamentary polls amid the coronavirus outbreak and said it will consider modifications as required and suited to the Indian context wherever elections need to be held in this kind of pandemic environment.

"Our people are studying the modifications made by South Korea in procedures while holding elections," Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa told PTI.

The Election Commission, Lavasa pointed out, will take into consideration the modifi-

cations that have been necessitated where polls have taken place, or might have to be conducted "in this kind of pandemic environment".

Responding to a question on how the poll campaign and conduct of elections will be affected if the coronavirus pandemic refuses to die down soon, the Election Commissioner said whatever measures are to be taken will be taken in consultation with the health authorities of the country and the stakeholders.

He, however, added that much will depend on how long the present situation continues. "If this persists, some modifications of the existing

procedures might be required," he said.

However, he added that it was "too early" to say whether COVID-19 would have a bearing on future Indian elections.

"The Bihar Assembly polls are still some months away," an EC functionary pointed out. The term of the present Bihar Assembly ends in November.

In March, the poll panel had deferred Rajya Sabha elections to 18 seats due to the coronavirus outbreak. No fresh dates have been announced yet.

Former Chief Election Commissioner OP Rawat was of the view that the virus would not have a bearing on

future elections. He said in the past too, there had been outbreaks of virus but elections were held without making changes in the system.

Nasim Zaidi, another former Chief Election Commissioner, suggested that the poll panel should set up a task force to "review" standard operating procedures for holding elections.

"In the light of the disease and depending on how things unfold, stakeholders, including political parties, the EC and health officials will have to apply their mind on SOPs related to precautions to be taken in each step of holding elections right from filing nominations to actual voting," he said. - PTI

Entire Muslim community cannot be held responsible for one group's 'crime': Naqvi

NEW DELHI, April 23: The entire Muslim community cannot be held responsible for one group's "crime", Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Thursday while reacting to instances of Muslims being blamed for the spurt in COVID-19 cases after Tablighi Jamaat congregation here, and asserted that most of the minority community members have condemned the group's action.

In an interview to PTI, Naqvi also expressed confidence that Muslims will abide by lockdown guidelines during the holy month of Ramzan.

He said across the India, imams, ulema and Muslim organisations have unanimously decided that during Ramzan (the Islamic holy month), Muslims will not congregate in mosques, religious places, and perform all rituals like iftaar (breaking of fast) and taraweeh (special prayers) at home keeping in mind social distancing norms.

Naqvi said he has spoken

with State waqf board officials, social and religious leaders, imams on adherence to the lockdown and social distancing guidelines during the Ramzan month starting Friday or Saturday evening and they have begun creating awareness among the people.

Asked about some people blaming Muslims for the

spread of the pandemic after a large number of cases were found linked to the Tablighi Jamaat event at Nizamuddin here, Naqvi said the whole community cannot be held responsible for the "crime" of one organisation or one person.

"Whatever that organisation did, criminal negligence or crime ... most Muslims have

21 foreigners who had attended Tablighi meet arrested

THANE, April 23: The crime branch of Thane Police on Thursday arrested 25 persons, including 21 foreign nationals who had allegedly attended a gathering of the Tablighi Jamaat in Delhi in March.

They were arrested after their quarantine period was over. A court later granted them bail, an official said.

The congregation in Delhi's Nizamuddin area turned out to be a major coronavirus hotspot, following which police in every State began to track down those who had attended it.

Senior inspector Nitin Thakre said those arrested included 13 Bangladeshis and eight Malaysian nationals while four persons are local residents. The foreign nationals violated the rules under their tourist visas and attended the Tablighi meet and later returned here, he said. They were found to be living at Tanvir Ulum Madrasa Trust, Kausa, and Al Nadi Ul Falah, Kausa. On April 1 they were detained and quarantined at a shelter at Shil Daighar. - PTI

strongly reacted to it, condemned it and called for action against it. Entire community cannot be held responsible for one person or one organisation's crime," he asserted, adding that this has always been India's culture.

Naqvi's comments also assume significance in view of the 57-member prominent international Muslim grouping, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), asking India to take "urgent steps" to protect the rights of its minority Muslim community and stop the incidents of "Islamophobia" in the country.

Hitting out at the OIC, the minister had said the country is "heaven for Muslims" and those trying to vitiate the atmosphere of prosperity cannot be friends of Indian Muslims.

Naqvi said those targeting Muslims are a few isolated people who are trying to spread "misinformation" and "we should be united and isolate such elements". - PTI



The 1st Step

It is said that the first small pox vaccine reached India in the year 1802. Anna Dusthall, a three year old child from Bombay (now Mumbai) became the first person in India to receive smallpox vaccine on June 14, 1802.



apnedeshkojano | contribution@apnedeshkojano.com
Powered by: Priya Communications

Health workers battle emotional stress while fighting COVID-19

MUMBAI, April 23: Healthcare workers at the forefront of the war against coronavirus are not only facing the daunting task of handling patients, but are also fighting to keep their own worries and emotional stress at bay.

A doctor from a leading Mumbai hospital, who is currently home quarantined after he came in contact with a colleague who had coronavirus symptoms, said these times are challenging for everyone, including the medical fraternity.

Even though his colleague tested negative for coronavirus, the doctor is not taking any chances as he has aged parents and a six-month-old son at home.

"I haven't touched my baby since the last one month. Yesterday was my wife's birthday, but I could not participate in the celebration since I am confined to a separate room in the house," the doctor told PTI.

He said some of them at the frontline of the COVID-19 war are feeling exhausted and running out of patience.

"Initially, we thought we would tide over the crisis. But, now April is ending and there is no sign of decrease in coronavirus cases. My colleagues haven't met their families for last one month," he said.

"The junior doctors, nurses and paramedics have really taken up this war as a challenge. We hope we are able to flatten the curve," he said.

He said wearing the personal protection equipment (PPE) and masks for long hours is also no mean task and makes them feel suffocated.

The PPE comprises a gown, shoes, cap, N-95 mask, goggles and double gloves which are air tight. "Still, there is no guarantee of protection against the virus," he said.

Most hospitals here have separate coronavirus disease ward, ICU and a dedicated medical team whose members work for five days

and then are quarantined for seven days, he added.

A nurse, who is ward in-charge in a city hospital, was initially quite worried when she was told last month that the medical facility will admit COVID-19 patients, and she and her team will be working in the specially created ward.

"We were not mentally prepared and had heard about how serious the situation was in China. I was more worried for my young team than my 15-year-old son and husband. What if I was got infected while treating the patients?" she said, adding that they did not even know how to wear the PPE. But, her inner struggles continued when she could not celebrate her son's 15th birthday on March 24, as the first COVID-19 patient got admitted to their hospital that day.

"I felt sad and at the same time wondered if I was making my family and team unsafe. I felt I was responsible for their safety. So, we sent our son to my parents' home and me and my husband maintained social distancing," she said.

But, the emotional turmoil continued and one day, after returning home, she cried. Her son consoled her, saying she was part of efforts being made at the global level to fight the pandemic and should not be emotional.

"My son was proud of me. The next day, I joined the duty at my hospital and worked non-stop for the next few days. My son would call me at night to enquire about me. Some nurses did not report to work due to family pressure or fear of being isolated by society, but my family allowed me to work," she said.

While she was all geared up for her work, she was earlier this month asked to remain in institutional quarantine for 10 days after she came in contact with a ward boy who tested positive for coronavirus.

"My test later came out negative. I felt God wanted me to continue my work. There is no fear of coronavirus now," the nurse said. - PTI

MESSAGE FOR TODAY

The enemies of freedom do not argue; they shout and they shoot.

— WILLIAM INGE

The Assam Tribune

Stark ingratitude

One of the saddest aspects of India's fight to contain the Covid-19 pandemic is the stark ingratitude being displayed by a section of the public towards the health workers who are at the frontline of this battle. Even doctors who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty have suffered, with stupid and ignorant people trying to prevent their burial and performance of last rites because they think this will pose a health hazard. It is of no use informing these ignoramuses that corpses cannot infect the living if social distancing norms are maintained and the individuals handling the rites wear protective gear. The media too is rife with reports of doctors having been spat at, and patients abusing nurses and other health workers. For instance, Indian television channels had shown a mob throwing stones at two female doctors, who had gone to an area in Indore, to check on a woman suspected of having Covid-19. It is not only that poor and illiterate people are being so crass; even educated and affluent members of society in many parts of India are displaying bias against health workers. There have been numerous reports of doctors and nurses, returning from their duties, being stopped from entering their homes in residential complexes because of fear that they were carriers of coronavirus, and police having to step in to keep them from being ostracized.

Things having reached such a sorry state, the Indian Medical Association had to demand that the Centre enact a law to protect medical professionals from attacks while on duty, and that in the absence of an urgent response doctors would observe a 'black day'. This has now prompted the Centre to amend the old Epidemic Act and bring in an ordinance under which any person who attacks a health worker can be jailed for a maximum of seven years. The ordinance also makes attacks on health workers cognizable and non-bailable. In order to fast-track such cases, the ordinance stipulates a period of 30 days within which investigation on attack against health workers has to be completed and verdict delivered within one year. Depending on the nature of any attack, punitive fines ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 7 lakh can be imposed. In case any damage is caused to vehicles or clinics of health workers, those held responsible will have to pay a fine double the market rate of the property damaged. Needless to say, such a stringent measure to protect our frontline 'warriors' had been exigent and has come none too soon. However, in India laws by themselves are not enough and their rigorous implementation too is required. Above all, the authorities have to constantly educate the public as to the invaluable service our health workers are providing and the sacrifice they are constantly making.

Flood-control measures

With pre-monsoon rains lashing the region for the past one week, the State needs to brace for the monsoons that will inevitably trigger waves of floods in the coming months. The ongoing lockdown has severely affected activities cutting across spheres but now many of the norms have understandably been relaxed and the Government needs to expedite the functioning of departments such as Water Resources which has its task cut out ahead of the flood season. Given that a month has been lost during the lockdown and the spectre of a major flood looms, it will have to work on a war footing to ensure that old and breached embankments are repaired at the earliest. Shrugging off the lethargy induced by the shutdown will be difficult, with workforce shortages putting further hurdles in normal execution of labour-intensive works such as repair or construction of embankments. But the hurdles must be overcome in quick time as flood-control measures warrant no delay ahead of the rainy season.

Floods in Assam being a routine phenomenon, they call for adoption of timely and holistic measures for easing the magnitude of the floods so that damage to standing crops, human settlements and vital infrastructure like roads is minimized. Instead, we have seen successive government groping in the dark for a lasting and effective mechanism to deal with the menace. We need to evolve a mechanism that is long-term, scientific, and with due thrust on environmental aspects that are known to aggravate flood conditions. The huge network of existing embankments is worn out, with over 70% of the embankments not witnessing any maintenance since the past five-six decades. It is hardly surprising that the waves of floods keep causing breach of a number of embankments every year, inundating large swathes of settlement and cropland. Similarly, anti-erosion measures, too, have fallen short of meeting their objective, with huge landmass eroded by the Brahmaputra every year. Resolving the twin menace of flood and erosion undoubtedly entails huge expenditure but it is also time the worthiness of the existing measures was put to scrutiny. Rather than persisting with conventional means, the Government should consider experimenting with emerging technologies for tackling the menace. The best practices from outside that have proved to be useful in severe flood-prone regions can definitely provide some food for thought for our authorities. The Water Resource Department that is responsible for maintenance of embankments has a history of not starting or completing repair work on breached embankments within the desired time. This is despite the fact that the lean winter season provides the authorities enough time in which to complete such work. The increasing magnitude of flood and erosion warrants a rethink on our flood management. Mere pumping in funds is unlikely to serve any long-term purpose unless a foolproof protection mechanism is worked out with thrust on expertise, planning and execution.

Opportunities at the time of corona crisis

■ Kalpajit Saikia

In this present hour of crisis, there are a few developments which may change the way international trade is conducted. Firstly, Japan's incentive of \$2.2 billion for its companies to exit China; secondly, the US President's attack on China for non-transparency during the outbreak; and thirdly, the Indian Government's Rs 10,000 crore incentive for local development and manufacturing of APIs (active pharmaceutical ingredients). Though unrelated, these developments target the most controversial yet smart international trade player of the last three decades: China.

Most of the countries run massive trade deficits with China. India's trade deficit in 2018-19 with China was \$54 billion. While India imported goods and services \$87 billion, its export stands at only \$13 billion. The focus of the Indian Government has been to reduce the trade deficit by initiatives like Make in India. This helped India reduce the import from China marginally for electrical machinery, but the deficit is widening in other categories.

The present crisis of coronavirus has made many nations relook at the way they run trade. One of the important realizations is that the over-dependency for raw materials on a specific country can lead to the collapse of an industry. Countries have realized that China holds the key to their economies by controlling 70% of the global raw material supply. This awareness has hit India also very hard. Take the example of the Indian pharmaceutical industry. India's pharma industry stands at around \$40 billion employing 27 lakh people directly or indirectly. The exports comprise around \$20 billion in that and

generates \$11 billion trade surplus. But this industry is dependent on China for APIs, which is the basic raw material for pharmaceutical products. In fact, Indian pharma companies import 70% of APIs from China. If an uncontrollable pandemic or a conflict stalls trade between India and China, it will lead to the demise of the entire pharmaceutical industry in India.

The trade deficit with China is almost equal to Assam's GDP. While this is concerning, it also provides immense opportunity to the India States. Deepak Parekh, one of the topmost financial brains in the country, has suggested that the Indian States should take the initiative to lure the Japanese companies moving out of China. He suggested that the offer of land of 2000-5000 acres in special economic zones will attract the companies. Assam needs to do more than that. Assam needs to build a compelling case for these companies to move to Assam instead of recognized business friendly States like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat or Karnataka. Assam immediately needs to start a task force to chase these opportunities and work on a policy to attract these companies. The initial motivation should be job creation rather than revenue.

There are other areas Assam can immediately look at. Pharmaceutical API manufacturing is surely one of them. Assam can target 10-15 top pharmaceutical companies in India with various incentives and offer to set up their manufacturing hubs.

Unlike other pharma formulation businesses, API manufacturing is different. It is manufactured in bulk and shipment is required to only a few manufacturing locations. Hence, it will be relatively easier to structure a compelling plan in the industrial policy for the APIs.

Electrical machinery import from China is around Rs 1.45 lakh crore in 2018-19. Though it has

Assam needs to do more than that. Assam needs to build a compelling case for these companies to move to Assam instead of recognized business friendly States like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat or Karnataka. Assam immediately needs to start a task force to chase these opportunities and work on a policy to attract these companies.

reduced from Rs 1.84 lakh crore in 2017-18, there is still good scope for the Indian States to promote local manufacturing to further reduce the gap. Assam should have a long-term electrical machinery manufacturing strategy and start by attracting domestic manufacturers. There is also scope for local entrepreneurship in manufacturing of parts and sub-assemblies. If the pace of reduction of import from China in this area continues at the same rate, India has an opportunity for another Rs 30,000 crore worth of additional domestic production of electrical machinery this

year. Assam can try to grab a majority share in that.

One of the interesting categories of products imported from China is plastic items which adds Rs 19,000 crore in our import bill. India is also a major exporter of plastic goods with an export of around Rs 75,000 crore. Around 70-80% of the plastic production is in the MSME sector with a total employment of 40 lakh people. Assam has taken its first steps with a plastic park in Tinsukia. But the need of the hour is to have an integrated plastic goods manufacturing strategy in which local entrepreneurship development should be the primary focus.

Assam needs to move fast, faster than other States who already have the advantage in the form of a sound investment environment, infrastructure and quicker access to ports. Five important steps will surely help.

Sector-wise Task force: A focused special task force is needed to do institutional marketing of Assam, its economic zones, build entrepreneurship, help in policy formulation, facilitate technology collaboration, control quality and provide marketing assistance for the manufactured goods. Industry professionals should be a part of the task force and should be formed sector-wise. This will be the planning, execution and operationalization engine of Assam's industrial vision.

Land and resources: Immediate identification and notification of land and economic zones for specific industries is required. The Assam Government should be able to

provide guarantee for uninterrupted supply of water, electricity and availability of waste disposal infrastructure.

Skill development: This is a critical and tricky area. The State Government needs to be a little more granular in its approach of skill development and it should be tightly linked to a planned manufacturing of a category of products. Generic skills are not appreciated in today's world and organizations have limited time and resources to skill people. Good incentive should be provided to attract niche skills to come and work in Assam. Skill development is a specialized activity and professionals should be employed to design and execute the same.

Friendly policy: Assam has a clear disadvantage of infrastructure, utilities, distance from markets and ports, and unfamiliar investment climate. The Government should make it up with aggressive industrial policy. The present industrial policy should be revamped with a plan for larger incentives. More aggressive subsidies should be worked out for capital investment.

Salesmanship: The relocation of the Tata Nano factory from West Bengal to Gujarat happened with a simple message from Narendra Modi to Ratan Tata: "Welcome to Gujarat." Entrepreneurs look at the eagerness, intent and trustworthiness of the government when they plan for investment in a State. Ministers and top bureaucrats should have one-on-one engagements with the owners of top businesses. Investment summits and group events can't demonstrate the eagerness an industrialist want to see in a government.

There are huge opportunities now. Time will tell if Assam can grab a pie of it or not.

Covid-19: Where do we go from here?

■ Pallavi Konwar

A microscopic organism has brought the human world to its knees. In a few short weeks, it has dismantled our world in a way that few could have imagined. This minute virus has not only put the breaks on our economic activities but in the process has also dismantled some of our long-held notions about what is important in our social and political life.

The ill-effects of Covid-19 is all too painfully clear for all to see in the daily statistics of deaths and hospital admissions at home and across the world. However, the virus has also given us wide-eyed clarity on other things that we had chosen to happily overlook over time. It has shone a spotlight on the fractures and fissures in our societies, and on the inequalities and injustices in them; it has exposed the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of our capitalist economies and in the process highlighted what is truly valuable for mankind to exist and thrive.

Like a sieve, the virus has done the sifting of our muddled and polluted world, to show each of us our

world and our place in it in new light. It has given us a glimpse of what could be possible for our world to be: cleaner, greener and more caring. That is, if we choose to learn the lessons from this crisis and implement them.

While we have been in isolation, it has been surprising to realize how little we really need to be happy. Besides, food, clothing and shelter, the main things we need are our friends and family, and our community for a sense of belonging. Other than that, one of the key things we need for happiness is our own health: both mental and physical.

With increasing urbanization and consumerism, people have been moving further and further away from the natural world. In the process, we have been losing connection with it and therefore an appreciation of how our own existence is intertwined with it. On the flip side, the rise in population has meant human encroachment into biodiverse areas, leading to massive declines in biodiversity while increasing the risk of spillover of new infectious diseases from wild animals to humans. This pandemic is

a warning to all of us to take serious stock of our own individual actions and limit the harmful impact of these actions on our environment. This might mean a number of things: buying less things that we don't need, reducing our waste, recycling everything possible, composting our food waste, connecting more with the natural world by growing our own food and/or changing our mode of travel. Whatever we do, we all can make a difference.

Since the virus has affected every country in the world without discrimination, it will also be up to our leaders to learn these lessons and implement changes at the national policy level. Some of these lessons will be relevant for the particular national context, whether that be creating a universal healthcare system for citizens, or revamping existing policies to commit extra resources and funding to ensure the system is 'fit for purpose'. It will also inevitably mean looking beyond healthcare and assessing the vulnerabilities laid threadbare by this crisis. For the UK, for example, this crisis highlighted the acute dependency of vital products and necessities on the

Chinese manufacturing capacity. For some others, it might be the dependency on a single national resource (read oil) for driving income. Countries will need to assess their own fault lines to address their vulnerabilities in a post-Covid world. For some, this could mean re-energizing neglected sectors and industries by creating new business models; for others such as India, with a vast rural population, this might mean ensuring a sustainable living wage by enhancing farming and modernizing it as well as increasing manufacturing so that cities are not burdened beyond their carrying capacity.

But most importantly, in a globalized world, we will need our leaders to rise above themselves and lead the world with one vision for this connected world. Today, more than ever, we need our leaders to be statesmen and not mere politicians. We need them to come together to forge a new path of economic recovery and growth that is value additive for the world and not resource depleting for the planet. We need to forge a path that values and maintains the fine balance between our physical and natural world.

We have seen first-hand what happens when that balance is disturbed even before Covid-19 hit us. This was evident in the wildfires that ravaged Australia at the end of 2019 and early 2020, burning an estimated 50 million acres and destroying more than one billion animals. Over the last year, we have had numerous record-breaking and unprecedented weather events across the world, be it the extraordinary heat-waves in Europe, the record melting of Arctic sea ice, hurricane Dorian ravaging the Bahamas, cyclone Iddai wreaking havoc in Mozambique or the heaviest monsoon in the last 25 years in India bringing disastrous flooding across the country.

This is a time of reckoning. For many of us, this means taking a long hard look at what we attach value to, personally and as a nation. The decisions we will take as individuals, and as nations, in the post-Covid world will determine whether we will rise from this crisis to thrive in a world that is ecologically sustainable and economically equitable or whether we imperil our species and future generations with our short-termism and self-serving decisions that have led us to this point.

Letters to the EDITOR

Sir, — Amid the Covid-19 pandemic-induced lockdown across this entire planet, many children are sitting at home glued to the cell phone or television. Researchers have found that much of screen exposure can be linked to autism spectrum disorder (ASD)-like symptoms in babies and small children. In this aspect, YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki has also shared how she regulates her five kids' screen time. Wojcicki says she takes their phones away, particularly on vacation, to help them focus on the 'present'. She wants her kids to be responsible for how much time they spend on their phones and learn 'self-control methods'. We as well as our children too need to learn when to focus on a conversation and when it is ok to go and watch videos or do other activities in the internet.

In this lockdown the parents need to encourage their children to other recreational and creative activities. This can be singing, dancing, painting, art of storytell-

Regulating children's screen time

ing, developing the art of speaking, etc. Also for positive psychological and emotional growth, our children should be encouraged to go for some sort of meditation and self-introspection. This is not a time to sit idle but to harness our inner strength. Yours etc., RAJIB DUTTA, North Lakhimpur.

Stigma is dangerous

Sir, — The stigma attached to the disease is more dangerous than the coronavirus itself. The Indian medical professionals are now increasingly fighting on a whole new front in the Covid-19 battle: stigma. Fully under the grip of the global pandemic, the country is reporting cases of doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, on the frontline of the battle, being shunned by others for fear of being infected. This includes the threat of being evicted from their own apartments and general ostracism. Many incidents are coming to light where doctors are threatened not to enter their own homes in fear that his or her immediate neighbours will get infected. Additionally, shocking incidents of physical violence have

also been reported against the doctors. Many such doctors share their pain on social media and are forced to seek government intervention. India's healthcare workers, especially doctors, are an overworked lot even under normal circumstances. In this crucial time, the pressure on the healthcare workers is manifold. Ensuring the safety of the doctors and healthcare workers, the apex court of the land has already directed the Centre, all States and Union Territories to provide necessary police security to the medical staff in hospitals and places where patients are either quarantined, suspected or diagnosed with Covid-19 and take necessary action against those persons who obstruct and commit any offence in respect to performance of duties by the doctors, medical staff and other government officials. The Government too has announced strict action under the Epidemic Diseases Act against those indulging in such harassment. However, how far these will be implemented is a matter of concern. Yours etc., KUMAR ROSHAN DUSAD, Mangaldai.

Partial relaxation

Sir, — The order of partial relaxation of lockdown in some sectors is good but the WHO's warning against the ease of lockdown is also a concern. Those people who are involved in the sectors where the relaxation would be implemented should maintain strict preventive measures by following the guidelines issued by the Government. We have to be more careful when we go out for any work so as to ensure that the activity will go smoothly and a decrease in the rate of positive cases is also achieved. Also, we witness the violation of lockdown rules by some sections of people on a regular basis, which also is a serious issue. Yours etc., RAJBIR SAHA, Guwahati.

Covid testing in Assam

Sir, — Some relaxations of the lockdown rules in Assam have been announced. It is a good sign and a positive indication that Assam is transforming into a Green Zone. But on April 21, we observed hundreds of people without any reason coming out of their homes with some excuses. If this trend continues, we may encounter a

dramatic spike in the Covid-19 cases, and it is the citizens who should be concerned over the situation. The State Health Ministry should go for pool testing at the ground level as rapidly as possible. Without testing we cannot confirm that Assam is Covid-19 free. Yours etc., RAHUL GOSWAMI, Jorhat.

Food relief

Sir, — Regarding the government decision to provide five kg of rice to poor people who are not under the National Food Security (NFS) Act, I want to inform the authorities concerned that those who are genuinely poor should only get the benefit. There are some sections of people who pretend to be poor, some are also under the NFS Act to get the benefit with the help of some local unscrupulous people of the respective areas. So, before distribution the officials must ensure they have the proper list of the genuinely poor people and make necessary arrangements for distribution. Yours etc., RK SAHA, Maligaon, Guwahati.

Articles (within 1000-1100 words) and Letters to the Editor for publication in the editorial page may be sent to the email ID: editor@assamtribune.com.



WEATHER GUWAHATI

LOCAL FORECAST:

Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain/thundershower are very likely to occur. Maximum and minimum temperatures are most likely to be 30°C & 19°C respectively on Friday.

TEMPERATURE:

Max 28.2°C
Min 18.8°C

GPC decries attack on Arnab

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 23: The Guwahati Press Club (GPC) today condemned the attack on the editor-in-chief of Republic TV Arnab Goswami and has urged the Mumbai Police to take appropriate action against the culprits.

"There is a rule of law in our country and such acts cannot be condoned no matter what the circumstances," GPC president Manoj Kumar Nath and general secretary Sanjoy Ray said in a statement.

Expressing concern over recurring incidents of attack on journalists across the country, including Assam, the GPC also urged the Assam government to bring in a law for safety and security of mediapersons.

Masks distributed: City-based Hayat Hospital distributed around 200 masks and sanitizer bottles to people from the field of journalism on the premises of the Press Club here on Thursday.

Khalsa Centre feeding the poor

GUWAHATI, April 23: The Khalsa Centre North East, which has been feeding the hungry lot amidst the nationwide lockdown and currently serving over 4,000 meals on a daily basis, has made an impassioned appeal to the benevolent section of society, including the media, to highlight their philanthropic mission and support it financially, too, if possible, to help it carry on its fight against hunger.

In a press release, the centre said people can contact it at 9435040009 to extend their help in whichever way they can, the release added.

Song of hope and positivity released

CORRESPONDENT

JORABAT, April 23: *Osto-Beli* – a song of hope and positivity composed and performed by Rakesh Riyan featuring Deeg Diganta and Dhruv Thakuria – was released today to keep the people's spirits high amid the novel coronavirus pandemic in the State. The team said this song is intended to inspire and motivate people to hold on and not lose hope in these difficult times.

Since studios are closed due to the nationwide lockdown, the team recorded the vocals on iPhone11, and for the rest of the composition the artists collaborated from their homes with their respective pieces of work.

Corona forces cancellation of Ambubachi Mela

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 23: For the first time in its recorded history, the annual Ambubachi Mela organised at the Kamakhya Temple atop the Neelachal Hill, has been called off. The annual festival witnesses footfalls of 20 to 25 lakh pilgrims and tourists from all over the country and abroad.

The five-day festival which is usually organised from June 22 to 26 every year, marks the annual menstruation cycle of the Mother Goddess Kamakhya and is considered to be among the biggest religious congregations in eastern India.

While the management of Maa Kamakhya Devalaya has confirmed that no festival will be organised during the Ambubachi period, it added that the rituals performed during the festival will continue as usual from June 22 to 26.

In a notification issued to the residents and land own-

This is for the first time in its recorded history that the annual Ambubachi Mela organised at the Kamakhya Temple atop the Neelachal Hill, has been called off



ers of Kamakhya and adjoining areas, the devalaya committee has asked them not to rent out their houses to the pilgrims for the festival.

"Ambubachi is one of the biggest events in the annual tourism calendar of Assam. For the residents also, it is a source of income as a good number of pilgrims come here and reside with the lo-

cals to soak in the spiritual ambience surrounding the temple. It was a tough decision for us. However, considering the threat perception due to the pandemic, we have decided not to hold the festival and restrict entry of devotees into the temple premises," *bor doloi* of the temple Mohit Chandra Sarma told *The Assam Tribune*.

In normal circumstances, the temple doors remain closed on the festival days. However, owing to the outbreak of COVID-19, the temple management committee had decided to keep the doors of the shrine closed from March 20 itself.

"As the lockdown is supposed to ease after May 3, and people will start enquiring for room rents, etc., for the festival, we took a decision well in advance for convenience of the residents as well as the pilgrims," Sarma further added.

Neelachal Hill is home to nearly 500 to 600 local families, mostly associated with the religious activities of the temple. More than 90 per cent of the residents offer rooms on rent to the pilgrims for the Ambubachi Mela.

Besides, the hotels, lodges, homestays, etc., that also witness significant occupancy during that time of the year, will suffer financial losses because of the pandemic.

IndianOil assures consumers of LPG home delivery

GUWAHATI, April 23: In view of many customers crowding LPG distributorships for refills 'out of panic or due to many unfounded rumours', IndianOil has issued a clarification about availability of home delivery options from the IndianOil LPG distributorships and availability of LPG in the market.

In a press statement IndianOil stressed the need for its customers to book cylinders staying safe at home by using various options like IVRS, Whatsapp, IndianOil ONE app, etc. Once booking has been done, customers can stay at home and the cylinders will be delivered at their doorstep, it said.

The press statement further said, "Many customers are even demanding LPG refills without bookings and are coming down to collect the cylinders from the godown. Many instances have been observed where the public are intercepting/blocking the LPG delivery vehicles enroute to home delivery and demanding refills without any valid bookings. This is creating a problem in systematic and timely home delivery of the refills."

On such occasions IndianOil brings the matter to the notice of the district authorities and seeks help wherever required.

Refuting rumours that the supply of LPG refills to distributors is not adequate, IndianOil clarified that LPG refills are supplied as and when distributors book their indents which are executed within a day or two. It also said, in order to ensure all the LPG demand across the North East is fulfilled, the company has augmented its supply chain logistics and has also started 24x7 operations of two major locations in the region

i.e. North Guwahati Bottling Plant and Silchar Bottling Plant. This has increased the company's bottling capacity by nearly 45,000 LPG cylinders per day, enough to meet the LPG backlog of the entire North East, it said.

Meanwhile, IndianOil has again sought police security – which was withdrawn on April 20 after relaxation of the lockdown – at all the distributorships for seamless delivery of LPG refills to its customers while maintaining all social distancing and safety norms.

G Ramesh, Chief General Manager of the IndianOil AOD State Office has requested all customers to make use of the various online booking options and feedback options made available to the customers. He elaborated on the various mediums to book an LPG refill from the comfort of their homes like making a booking through IVRS by calling 7670024365 (Assam)/9089024365 (Rest of NE). Cylinders can also be booked via WhatsApp by typing "REFILL" to 7588888824 from the registered mobile number. Refills can also be booked through the IndianOil ONE app.

Any complaints on LPG safety can be lodged via the toll free No. 1906. Complaints can also be lodged through www.ioel.com, toll free No. 1800-2333-555, the IndianOil One app, IndianOilfacebook page and the company's twitter handles i.e. @IndianOilcl and @IOCL Assam.

Ramesh said, "All feedback lodged through these various mediums goes through an escalation matrix and it is our commitment that these will be closed within 7 days."



NFR transports 2.5 tonnes of medical items to NE states

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 23: Maligaon-headquartered Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has ramped up transportation of medical items and equipment to ensure their supply in this part of the country during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"NFR has transported nearly 2.5 tonnes of medical items to various north-eastern states through parcel express trains. Transportation of such items to the NE states is of great importance as these items are generally not manufactured in this region and states are heavily dependent on their transportation from outside. Masks, sanitizers and other medical items have become very essential in view of the present spread of the COVID-19," said Subhanan Chanda, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of NFR.

Drive against vendors yields Rs 18,500 fine

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, April 23: The Assam Livestock and Poultry Corporation and Guwahati Municipal Corporation today jointly conducted a drive and seized poultry, fish, vegetables, eggs and fruits from unauthorised vendors from different parts of the city.

During the drive, 50 kg poultry, 10 kg fish, 30 kg vegetables, five plates of eggs and 20 kg fruit were seized and a total amount of Rs 18,500 was collected as fine.

"The drive was conducted at Dispur, Beltola Survey, Beltola Tiniali, Beltola Bazar, Jayanagar Chariali, Six Mile, VIP Road, Basistha Chariali and Latakata at Basistha. We also checked the social distancing norms, round marking, use of masks, licence, permission, price listing and hygiene of the allotted vendors," a source in the GMC said.



Working to live: An old woman carries a load of discarded cartons amid the COVID-19-induced lockdown, in Guwahati on Thursday. – UB Photos

Tribune to launch *Heal the World* digital music series on April 26

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 23: To keep people's spirits high amidst the prevailing gloom induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, *The Assam Tribune* is launching a new music series, *Heal the World*, which will be beamed live from its official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/TheAssamTribune>) on April 26 at 7 pm.

This digital music series will give readers an opportunity to experience the best of Indian music from the comfort of their living rooms.

The live video will remain on the site for viewers to access even after the session has ended, and the link can be shared across platforms.

Artists shall appear in their real avatars

at home and the experience is expected to be highly enriching for the audience.

The artists for the inaugural concert is Mumbai-based Sunita Khaund Bhuyan, who will present *Songs of Spring* – a folk fusion duet with pianist Ronojit Bhuyan – to celebrate the spring season and spread happiness and positivity among people amidst the pandemic.

Daughter of violinist Minoti Khaund, Sunita Khaund Bhuyan is a renowned violinist who plays Assamese folk music on the violin, infusing Scottish and Irish folk elements.

She is also a well-known leadership trainer, who uses music as a structured tool for leadership and change intervention for corporate and business schools across the world. Ronojit Bhuyan, her son, is also an accomplished western classical pianist in his own right.

Food distributed to poor in city localities

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 23: Rescuers of 1st Battalion of NDRF Guwahati (Assam) today distributed food among more than 500 poor people in Katamura village, Changsari, in Kamrup district. These people are contractual labourers from different parts of Assam.

Rituraj Hotel of Guwahati assisted in the distribution programme. A sanitization exercise was also carried out in different parts of Guwahati

and its outskirts. The NDRF teams sprayed disinfectants consisting of sodium hypochlorite in public places.

NGO Save Guwahati Build Guwahati (SGBG) along with Mushroom Development Foundation (MDF) also distributed food items to needy families in Beltola area with the help of city police on Wednesday. SGBG member Sanatan Das and MDF chairman Pranjal Barua represented the organizations along with other members, a press release stated.

The Guwahati Refinery Workers' Union has also come forward to reach out to the people facing difficulty earning their livelihood amidst the lockdown.

Union members with support from the Noonmati Students' Union and Noonmati Police Station distributed dry ration to 100 families of Noonmati and its adjoining areas on April 21, said a press release. They will distribute dry ration to around 400 underprivileged families in a phased manner.

Central Govt move to freeze dearness allowance denounced

CITY CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, April 23: The All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) has strongly protested the 'arbitrary decision' of the Central government to freeze dearness allowance due from January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 and demanded withdrawal of the decision in the interest of better industrial relations.

The railway employees and the railway pensioners have been shocked at the 'arbitrary order' to freeze dearness allowance to the Central government employees and dearness relief to the pensioners although the prices of all essential commodities have been increasing unabated day by day. The railwaymen have been working round the clock to reach essential

commodities across the country forgetting their family commitments during the present pandemic situation created due to coronavirus, AIRF president Rakkhal Das Gupta said in a press statement.

The statement urged the government not to compel the railwaymen to intensify their agitation which may cause serious industrial unrest in the country.



Forget social distancing! A dog sharing bedspace with a destitute woman on a footpath even as a sparrow hops about nearby, in Guwahati on Thursday. – UB Photos

Online classes: still a distant dream for students of rural areas

MANASH PRATIM DUTTA

GUWAHATI, April 23: Although they live in a digital era, attending an online class is still a distant dream for a large section of college students residing in the rural areas of Assam.

For these students, weak cellular network, inability to buy a smart phone due to poor economic condition and frequent disruptions in power supply in their villages constitute stiff challenges for them to continue with academic activities amid the lockdown.

In the current academic year, college students of Assam have not been able to attend regular classes for more than two months because of the precautionary measures against the coronavirus. During this period, students of the sci-

ence stream are the worst sufferers as they have not been able to do their laboratory works.

Explaining the problem, Principal of Moridhol College Dr Kamal Gogoi said, "For a college which is located in a rural area, online classes cannot be an alternative option to continue with academic activities. Most of our students are not tech-savvy and for them attending an online class is not easy. Again, most of the students don't have android mobiles. Apart from these issues, weak cellular network and frequent disruptions in electricity supply are really some big issues for us. So ultimately a huge number of students have been deprived of the online initiative."

Echoing similar concerns, Principal of Barama College Tiken Chandra Das in-

formed that all teachers of his college have been trying to keep their students engaged through online classes during the lockdown hours so that they can

Lack of money to buy android mobiles, weak cellular network and frequent disruptions in power supply are major constraints

avert loss of classes. But, "Most of our students come from economically weaker sections and for them purchasing an android mobile is difficult. Moreover, frequent disruptions in electricity supply are also a normal phenomenon in our place," Das said.

Principal of JB College Dr Bimal Bora informed that the online class system is

working very well in case of arts students. But in case of science stream students, it is not so.

"During the lockdown hours we are

trying to reach out to our students through online media. Our main motive is to keep them busy. Especially, we are using WhatsApp to reach out to them. But I think online classes cannot be a complete alternative to regular classes," Bora said.

Dibyajyoti Hazarika, Principal of Maibong College stated that the students

residing in rural areas have been deprived of availing the facilities of online classes due to various factors. "Now we are taking online classes through WhatsApp and trying to cover as many students as possible. We are also engaging our NSS volunteers in this regard. Moreover, we are in contact with many students over phone," Hazarika said.

Vice Chancellor of Cotton University Prof Bhabesh Chandra Goswami informed that his university will develop a system so that they can continue with the online class facility in normal times too.

"It is a new experience for most of us. For the students who could not attend online classes due to technical problems, I instructed the teachers concerned to send the voice recording of classes to them through WhatsApp. Again, very

soon we will appeal to our students to help the school children in their respective localities to continue with their studies," Goswami told *The Assam Tribune*.

Head of the Department of Communication and Journalism, Gauhati University Dr Ankuran Dutta informed that after the recent thunderstorms, presence of students in the online classes decreased drastically. The department completed a hundred online classes recently.

General secretary of the Gauhati University Post Graduate Students' Union Moon Talukder asserted that more than 50 per cent students of the State have not been able to attend the online classes as most of them do not have android mobiles and adequate internet data. "It is not possible to conduct examinations after such online classes," he said.

Corona Snippets

Let us stay focussed till battle is won, says Vice President

NEW DELHI, April 23: As the country completes 30 days of the coronavirus-induced lockdown, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Thursday said people have put up with tremendous discomfort in order to ward off a bigger catastrophe. "Over the last 30 days, we, as a nation, have been waging a tough battle. We have endured considerable hardship and unprecedented disruption in our daily lives," he said in a series of tweets. He hailed the people "for their forbearance and willingness to put up with tremendous discomfort in order to ward off a bigger catastrophe". "Let us stay united and focussed till the battle is won," he stressed. "Let us adhere to preventive measures like social distancing, including at work place, wearing masks, not spitting in public places avoiding religious gatherings," Naidu said. — PTI

Butterflies throng Bengaluru biological park after years

BENGALURU, April 23: Swarm of migratory butterflies flock to the Bengaluru Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBBP) here for the first time in recent years. This is the migratory period for some of the species such as blue tiger, glossy blue tiger, double branded crow and common crow butterflies, which have made the zoo their home, providing a visual treat, the park said quoting an entomologist. "Usually the butterflies migrate from Western Ghats (heavy rainfall region) to the Eastern Ghats (rain shadow region) to escape the monsoon season. Now the zoo premises has become home for thousands of colourful winged jewels," it said in a release. The lifespan of these brightly-coloured butterflies is said to be around 2 to 3 weeks. — PTI

Jamia Millia Islamia starts yoga and mindfulness sessions

NEW DELHI, April 23: Jamia Millia Islamia has started yoga and mindfulness training sessions for the residents of its hostels during the lockdown imposed to control the coronavirus outbreak, officials said. The university has started training sessions for residents of its MMA Jauhar Hall hostel. — PTI

5 ULFA cadres ...

(Contd from page 1)

Assam Police sources informed that the arrested cadres were wanted in a number of serious offences, including kidnapping and bomb blasts. Police also arrested another person for harbouring the ULFA cadres. All the arrested accused have been sanitized and COVID-19 tests done.

Poor shifting ...

(Contd from page 1)

"I do not want to live as a beggar. I have a family with two children, but still I would prefer to earn my meal rather than beg for food. Not that I am getting a lot through my work as a manual labourer, but it has protected my pride at the same time," Ismail, who insisted that he would not take free food provided by anyone, said.

New COVID-19 ...

(Contd from page 1)

"He completed his mandatory 14-day quarantine period and was found positive with COVID-19 in his second test," said Dhubri Joint Director of Health Services Sayed Imdadullah, who added that the samples of many of his acquaintances were also tested. "We are also preparing to collect samples of several other persons related to the fresh COVID-19 positive patient," he said, adding that till today the district has had 406 samples tested out of which five have been found positive, 248 negative, while results of 153 samples are being awaited.

Medical college ...

(Contd from page 1)

"ICMR says these test kits can be used for surveillance and that is what we are doing. We will have an idea of the spread of the virus," the Health Minister said.

Sarma further informed that the quarantine period of the people who came in direct touch with the positive patients have been increased to 28 days.

"We have seen that people are getting infected even after 14 days. The patient in Dhubri who tested positive today had been in quarantine since April 5. So, as per guidelines, we have increased the quarantine period of the direct contacts," he added.

BJP polarising ...

(Contd from page 1)

"As a nation, we must be wary of forces that seek to polarise in times of crisis such as these. The onus lies on us to ensure that we stand together as one nation in the face of all odds," the party said in a unanimous resolution.

The CWC also hoped the government will consider its suggestions in the constructive spirit to help the country and the people emerge victorious in this battle.

Addressing the meeting, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi alleged the BJP's attempt to create communal polarisation should worry every Indian. Her party will have to work hard to repair the damage.

"Let me also share with you something that should worry each and every one of us as Indians. When we should be tackling the coronavirus unitedly, the BJP continues to spread the virus of communal prejudice and hatred," she said.

"Grave damage is being done to our social harmony. Our party, we will have to work hard to repair that damage," the Congress chief added. — PTI

Prompt steps helped Sikkim in having ...

(Contd from page 1)

From March 2, medical teams and police started checking all the entry points to Sikkim and medical tests of all people entering Sikkim started.

After all the tourists left the State, one German tourist entered Sikkim from Bhutan and he was tested. It was found that he was not affected by coronavirus. Dhakal said that along with the inter-state borders, the international borders with Nepal, Bhutan and China were

also sealed and tests of people living in the inter-state border areas were carried out. Any person suffering from flu, cough and cold are being quarantined in the hospitals and tests are being carried out. Dhakal said that so far, Sikkim does not have any testing laboratory and the samples are being sent to North Bengal Medical College. However, he said that the Chief Minister has written to the Centre and Sikkim is likely to have its first testing laboratory soon.



A roadside flower vendor awaits customers, during the nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus, in Srinagar on Thursday. — PTI

Odisha puts Panchayats at forefront in fight against COVID-19

BHUBANESWAR, April 23: The Odisha government has put the village level authorities at the forefront to prevent spread of coronavirus when an anticipated five lakh migrants rush back home after lifting of the lockdown.

In order to make the local administration battle-ready, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had on Wednesday delivered oath to over 6,000 village heads that they will ensure that the returnees don't carry with them the disease as many of them would be travelling from the COVID-19-hit States.

The State government has already bestowed on the power of district collector to Sarpanchs (village headmen) so

that they can take tough decisions for better management of COVID-19 situation in the areas under their jurisdiction.

"We have decided to put Panchayats at the forefront to ensure that the highly infectious virus do not spread in rural areas," Panchayati Raj Department Minister Pratap Jena told reporters after the Group of Ministers meeting on coronavirus situation here Thursday.

Around 6798 Sarpanchs who took oath the previous day, promised they would implement the guidelines of the State government on COVID-19.

Giving detail of the strategy, Panchayati Raj Department Secretary DK Singh said like mandatory registration of for-

eign travellers, the State government has made this compulsory for those returning from other States too after the end of nationwide shutdown.

Besides, they would be subjected to 14 days isolation on arrival to their villages, he said. "No one will be allowed to enter Odisha without registration and all returnees will undergo 14-day mandatory quarantine," the Panchayat Raj Secretary said.

Singh justified mandatory quarantine for the returnees referring to reports that 80 per cent of the COVID-19 patients in different parts of the country did not show any symptoms of the infection.

He said the State government

has already made arrangements for placing them in quarantine at the panchayat levels.

We have already created two lakh beds facilities for quarantine of the returnees at panchayat levels. Another three lakh beds will be put in place before May 3 (end of lockdown as per the present order), Singh said, adding the returnees will be received by the government from railway stations and bus stands.

They cannot directly go to their house. The local level officers will receive the returnees and take them to panchayat quarantine centres where they will be provided stay, food and treatment, Singh said. — PTI

Have cut transmission ...

(Contd from page 1)

"The growth of COVID-19 cases has been more or less linear, not exponential; this indicates that the strategies we adopted have succeeded in containing the infection to a particular level. Post imposition of lockdown, while the number of new positive cases has increased by 16 times, testing increased by 24 times," Mishra said in his presentation.

"During the 30 days of

lockdown, we have been able to cut transmission, minimize spread and increase the doubling days of COVID-19. We have been able to consistently ramp up our testing and utilise our time preparing for the future in case the virus spreads further," he said.

Mishra also said that in the last month, the number of dedicated hospitals for treating coronavirus patients has been increased 3.5 times and the

number of isolation beds rose by 3.6 times.

"Despite a 24-fold increase in testing, percentage of positive cases is not rising. The percentage of positive cases as a ratio of testing is more or less the same as that a month ago," he said.

Mishra also claimed that India has done better than a majority of developed countries with respect to the percentage of test cases yielding positive results. — PTI

Himanta seeks views ...

(Contd from page 1)

"The university students had classes for only about a month during the second semester which began in January. In most of the departments, even 20 per cent of the course has not been completed. Even if the classes resume in June, it will require at least two months to complete the remaining course," the faculty members said.

Even colleges in Guwahati are yet to introduce the online teaching platform, not to speak

of those in rural areas.

The officials said the vice chancellors have suggested that the summer vacation may be called off and the semester breaks curtailed to a few days.

"According to the vice chancellors, even if the classes resume from June 10, the loss could be made up," the officials said, adding that mandatory online classes were one suggestion made to make up the loss during the lockdown period.

The session in universities begin from August and the next batch is slated for admission in July. The university students will lose around 65 days if the lockdown continues till May 30. Classes have remained suspended since March 17.

Faculty members also said that the government could have utilised the dedicated educational TV channels and the reach of BSNL in a better way to minimise academic losses of the students.

Arnab Goswami's car ...

(Contd from page 1)

"Shocking to see Arnab Goswami attacked after Congress CMs publicly threatened him. Sad to see such public hounding of a journalist for his freedom of speech. Congress shows it is the party that brought Emergency and continues its rich tradition of trampling free speech," Nadda tweeted.

Law Minister and BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad sought action against those involved

in the incident.

"Deeply condemn the violent physical attack on senior journalist #ArnabGoswami and his wife. State Police must take lawful action against the attackers," he tweeted.

Objecting to Goswami's remarks on Sonia Gandhi, the Congress asked the Information and Broadcasting Ministry to take action against the journalist and his TV channel, alleging that they violated broadcasting rules during a show.

In a letter to Javadekar, Mahila Congress chief Sushmita Dev claimed that the content of a show broadcast on Republic Bharat on Tuesday with Goswami as the anchor was "vile, misleading and hateful in nature".

"The broadcast in its entirety is a violation of the Programme Code prescribed under the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994," Dev alleged in her letter dated April 22. — PTI

Central team visits hospitals in Bengal

KOLKATA, April 23: A Central team on Thursday visited a quarantine centre in Rajarhat area in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district and a hospital in the city to take stock of the State's preparedness to combat the COVID-19 crisis, an official said.

Two inter-ministerial Central teams are in West Bengal to assess the preparedness of the State in tackling the coronavirus outbreak.

The team which was in Kolkata on Wednesday sought a detailed presentation from the West Bengal government on whether the level of testing in the State is adequate and enough oxygen, ICU beds and ventilators are available.

This team, led by Apurba Chandra, a senior bureaucrat in the Ministry of Defence, visited the quarantine centre in

Rajarhat and spent nearly an hour, the official said.

Later in the afternoon, the team went to MR Bangur Hospital, where several COVID-19 patients are undergoing treatment.

"Both at the quarantine centre and at the hospital, the Central team spoke to doctors and officials and took note of the details. They also enquired about the problems, if any, that the health staff are facing," a senior official said.

The second Central team in North Bengal, however, is yet to begin its field visits, the official said.

The team at North Bengal, led by Vineet Joshi, a senior official of HRD ministry, met health officials, including the Jalpaiguri district's Chief Medical Officer, and took stock of the situation. — PTI

UP farmhouse of Tablighi Jamaat leader raided

NEW DELHI, April 23: The Delhi Police's Crime Branch has raided a farmhouse of Tablighi Jamaat leader Maulana Saad Kandhavi, who was booked for organising a religious congregation here in violation of COVID-19 lockdown orders, officials said on Thursday.

The raid was carried out at Kandhavi's farmhouse in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district, they said.

The cleric was booked along with seven others on a complaint at the city's Nizamuddin Police Station for holding the congregation in alleged violation of the orders against large gatherings to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

IPC Section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) is among the Sections they have been booked, and the complaint was lodged by the Nizamuddin Station House Officer. — PTI

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION ASSAM

No. NHM-31013(11)/47/2018-HRD-NHM/1475 Date: 23/04/2020

NOTICE FOR INTERVIEW

This is to notify that, the candidates who have applied in response to the Advertisement No. NHM-31013/1/2018HRD-NHM/535 dated 8/4/2020 for the following contractual position under NHM, Assam that the date of interview through **Skype** of the shortlisted candidates is fixed as per schedule below:

Sl.	Name of Post	Date of Interview	Reporting Time	Time of Skype Interview	Venue
1	Epidemiologist	24.04.2020	2.30 PM	3:00 PM	Office of the Mission Director, National Health Mission, Assam, Saikia Commercial Complex, Christianbasti Guwahati-5

The list of shortlisted candidates is published in the NHM Website: <https://nhm.assam.gov.in>
Please visit the website <https://nhm.assam.gov.in> for details.

Sd/-
Mission Director, NHM, Assam

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION ASSAM

No. NHM-32040/6/2020-Construction-NHM/36 Dated Guwahati the 22nd April, 2020

INVITATION FOR E-BID (IFEB)

The Office of the Mission Director, National Health Mission, Christian Basti, Guwahati-5 invites bid for the works on **TWO BID SYSTEM on Turn Key Basis** under NHM as detailed below:-

Name of Work	Value of Work (In Rs.)	Bid Security (In Rs.)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.)	Period of Completion (from the date of issue of work order)
Construction of Mortuary Block at Diphu Medical College (Formerly AHMC&RI), Diphu, Karbi Anglong District under NHM on Turn Key Basis.	Rs. 1,42,45,985.00	2% for General Category & 1% for SC/ST Category	Rs. 10,000.00	10(Ten) Months

Eligibility Criteria:-

- Registered APWD (Bldg) Class I-A, B & C/CPWD Contractors /Reputed Const. Company/ Agency registered under Govt./ Public sector undertaking.
- Contractor must have satisfactory completed:-
 - Four Similar works, each of value not less than 25% of the estimated cost put on Tender OR
 - Three similar works, each of value not less than 40% of the estimated cost put on tender OR
 - Two similar works, each of value not less than 50% of the estimated cost put on tender OR
 - One similar works of value not less than 80% of the estimated cost, all amounts rounded off to a convenient full figure, in the last 5 years ending on the last day of the month previous to the one in which the tenders are invited.
- Contractor must have achieved average Annual Turnover of at least 30% of estimated cost in any **THREE YEARS** during last 5 years ending 31st March of the previous Financial Year.
- The Contractor having PAN Card/GST Registration/ Labour License/registration under EPF & MP Act, 1952 etc. are eligible to participate in the bid process.
- The intended bidders are asked to verify the site for the work prior to quoting their rates.**
- Cost of tender document should be drawn in favour of **State Health Society, Assam**, payable at **Guwahati** in the form of Pay Order/Demand Draft.
- Bid security with a validity of 225 (i.e.180+45) days should be in the form of **FDR/CDR/TDR** and drawn in favour of the **State Health Society, Assam**, payable at **Guwahati**.
- The Contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam ([website http://assamtenders.gov.in](http://assamtenders.gov.in)). Contractors/Bidders can download documents free of cost Contractors/Bidders have to necessarily download the bidding document from the ETS using their own ID (Digital Signature Certificate). Bid documents not procured (downloaded) through the ETS/not using the contractor's own user ID will be considered invalid and summarily rejected. Contractors submitting bids online have to submit copy of the documents of technical bid manually along with cost of tender document before the expiry of the sequence 'Online Bid Submission' date and time as mentioned in the tender schedule. Bid will be rejected/ cancelled if financial Bid submitted off-line/hard copy.
- The tender will be available through the link <http://assamtenders.gov.in> from **23/04/2020**.
- Tender Schedule:**

Sl No.	Name of Event	Start Date	Start Time	End Date	End Time
1	Tender Download	23.04.2020	12.00 HRS	14.05.2020	14.00 HRS.
2	Tender Submission	23.04.2020	14.00 HRS	14.05.2020	14.00 HRS.
3	Technical Bid Opening	15.05.2020	16.30 HRS.	-	-
4	Financial Bid Opening	Will be intimated latter on			

Technical bid submitted along with Cost of Tender and Bid Security manually will be accepted till 14/05/2020 up to 14.00Hrs.

Sd/-
Mission Director, NHM, Assam



WEATHER NORTHEAST

Forecast for NE: Rain/thunder-shower is very likely to occur at most places over Arunachal Pradesh and at many places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

Warning: Thunderstorm with lightning and gusty wind with speed (30-40) kmph is very likely to occur at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh. Thunderstorm with lightning and gusty wind with speed (40-50) kmph accompanied by hail is very likely to occur at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

Temperatures:

	Max (°C)	Min (°C)
Dibrugarh	25.2	17.1
Tezpur	28.7	19.0
Silchar	31.6	20.4
Dhubri	28.5	21.6
Jorhat	25.5	17.3
N Lakhimpur	26.6	17.6
Shillong	20.0	-
Cherrapunjee	21.7	14.0
Aizawl	26.8	15.1
Kohima	19.8	-
Pasighat	22.8	17.0
Itanagar	28.0	18.4
Imphal	28.0	26.2
Agartala	33.5	22.7

Contributions to fight COVID in Arunachal

CORRESPONDENT

ITANAGAR, April 23: Taking note of the "unprecedented" challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis in the State, the Arunachal Pradesh Chief Information Commissioner and the State Information Commissioner, in a meeting held here on Monday, voluntarily agreed to take a pay cut equal to 30 per cent of their gross salaries of one month, which is to be deposited to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

The Commission also decided that all hearings on RTI appeals and complaints would be held through video conferencing on the 'Lifesize' video app, which can be downloaded from the Google Play Store.

The Commission further decided that the receipt of appeals and complaints in physical form would be suspended till further orders, adding that those who intend to file appeals or complaints may e-mail to arunachal.ic@gmail.com.

Meanwhile, Arunachal Pradesh State Election Commissioner Hage Kojeen has also volunteered to contribute 30 per cent of his gross salary of one month to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. The State Election Commissioner has also appealed to all like-minded people to come forward to contribute as per their capacity to strengthen the hands of the State Government as well as the district administrations during this crisis.

While lauding the efforts of the State Government, particularly frontline warriors like police personnel, medical officers and staff, and other agencies rendering essential services, the State Election Commissioner urged people to observe the guidelines issued by the Government during the lockdown period to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh.

10 in Tripura quarantined after B'desh national tests positive

CORRESPONDENT

AGARTALA, April 23: Ten persons of a household in Aralia locality on the outskirts of the Tripura capital were placed under institutional quarantine after a Bangladesh national, who had stayed there for a brief period, tested positive for COVID-19 in the neighbouring country.

Swabs of the ten individuals, including the house owner, one Sital Gope, were collected by a medical team on Thursday, but the reports are still awaited. Besides, two workers of a bakery unit run by Gope, and their family members have been put under home quarantine.

According to information available, the Bangladesh citizen, a woman, stayed at

Gope's house from January 28 to April 6. She returned to her native place at Brahmanbaria in Bangladesh through the Akhaura ICP on April 7 and was taken to a local hospital on her arrival there.

On April 22, the woman tested positive for COVID-19 and was taken to institutional quarantine at the Bijoynagar Upzila Hospital in Brahmanbaria district, close to Agartala.

Soon after the information went viral on the social media, the Tripura Government swung into action and a district surveillance team rushed to Aralia. Gope's house at Aralia was sealed and all occupants of the house were taken to institutional quarantine last night.

When contacted, State Surveillance

Officer Dr Deep Debbarma today said that as per the standard norms, the ten occupants of the house were quarantined and the local people have been urged to strictly follow the lockdown rules.

Only two positive cases have been detected in Tripura so far. One patient has already been released from the hospital, while the second patient is also recovering.

Meanwhile, the State Government has decided to engage the Tripura State Rifles (TSR) along the Indo-Bangladesh border as a second line of defence to prevent any infiltration from across the border. The decision was taken in view of the rapid spread of coronavirus in Brahmanbaria district of Bangladesh during the last few days.



Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb visiting a relief camp set up for storm-hit people at Chikancherra in Sepahijala district on Thursday. - Photo: Correspondent

Nagaland allows industries in rural areas to operate

CORRESPONDENT

DIMAPUR, April 23: The Nagaland Government on Thursday permitted the industries located in rural areas and outside the municipal limits to resume their activities.

An order to this effect was issued by State Chief Secretary Temjen Toy, which said food processing industries, stone crushers, sawmills and brick kilns in the rural areas have been permitted to function.

Collection, harvesting and processing of minor forest produce and non-timber forest produce by Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers in the forest areas have also been allowed. The order said bamboo, coconut, areca nut, cocoa, spices plantation and their harvesting, processing, packaging, sale and marketing could be resumed.

It said the permitted construction activities in rural areas include water supply and sanitation,

laying and erection of power transmission lines and laying of telecom optical fibre and cable along with related activities.

Functioning of research establishments dealing with agriculture and horticulture activities, inter-State and intra-State movement of planting materials, honeybee colonies, honey and other beekeeping products also come under the permitted activities.

Shops of educational books for students, electric fans, recharge of prepaid mobile connections, food processing units such as bread factories, milk processing plants, flour and pulse mills, etc., located in the urban areas have also been allowed to resume their activities, the order said. However, social distancing as specified in the lockdown measures, national COVID-19 directives and standard operating procedure for offices, workshops, factories, establishments and farms must be adhered to, the order added.

Sikkim institutes to remain closed till May 31

A CORRESPONDENT

GANGTOK, April 23: All educational institutions in Sikkim will remain closed till May 31. It was decided at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Tuesday to assess the State's preparedness to fight COVID-19 and the compliance with lockdown guidelines in the State after partial easing of lockdown from April 20.

Sikkim is the only State in the country where no COVID-19 case has been reported so far. The meeting was attended by the Cabinet ministers and top officials of the State.

The meeting decided that the police and district administration should ensure that the restrictions are properly enforced, except for the relaxations made for MGNREGA works, agriculture, and permitted industries and activities. It was clarified that MGNREGA workers should carry out only those activities which are within the confines of their private holdings/farms, and no construction work can be carried out till further orders.

The State Government will review the situation again before May 3 to decide on the future course of action.

Restrictions on inter-State

movement of vehicles will remain in force till May 3 and all movements will be permitted through identified vehicles only. The meeting also discussed in detail the measures to be taken after possible lifting of the lockdown on May 3.

The Chief Minister stressed the importance of the Aarogya Setu app and called for its mandatory use by every individual for their own safety. He also appealed to the people to take utmost care of their health, strictly adhere to the safety guidelines issued by the State Government and comply with the lockdown norms.

Mizoram farmers get Rs 13.07 cr under PM-KISAN

CORRESPONDENT

AIZAWL, April 23: Hundreds of farmers in Mizoram have received financial assistance from the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) during the lockdown.

According to the BJP's Mizoram unit, an amount of Rs 1,307.40 lakh has been transferred to the accounts of farmers across the State.

A PIB release said Lungtiawii of Khawbung in Champhai district is one such farmer who received Rs 2,000 under the PM-KISAN scheme.

"Lungtiawii said that she is happy to receive Rs 2,000 during the lockdown. She has used the money for farming activities," the release said.

Zodinpui of Kolasib Venglai also received Rs 2,000 in her account under the scheme. She thanked the Centre for helping her during the lockdown period.

Scores of farmers have also received Rs 2,000 each in their bank accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. BJP sources said Mizoram has also received Rs 268.88 lakh under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana during the lockdown period.

Sikkim calls off border trade, Mansarovar Yatra

A CORRESPONDENT

GANGTOK, April 23: The Sikkim Government today said that the annual Sino-Indian border trade and the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra have been cancelled in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Border trade through the Nathu La Pass was scheduled to begin in May, while the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra to the Tibetan Autonomous Region via Nathu La was slated to commence in June.

State Commerce and Industry Minister BS Panth said the Sino-Indian trade route has been closed for an indefinite period in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. He said the decision would be communicated to the Union Government for necessary action.

Latest COVID-19 tests negative in Meghalaya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SHILLONG, April 23: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma has stated that all the 59 COVID-19 tests received today, were negative. Meanwhile, the condition of all the 11 active patients in the State has been stable.

"We received results of 59 tests today and all are negative," Sangma said. In all, 1,109 test samples have been sent out of which 1,000 results were negative and 97 results are still awaited.

The State Government has so far screened 24,382 persons, out of whom 5,208 are in home and institutional quarantine. Out of the total quarantined persons, 223 are primary contacts of the first COVID-19 patient of the State and 5,007 are secondary contacts.

Meanwhile, the State Government has stated that foodgrains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and non-NFSA have been distributed to 70,198 Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) house-

holds. The total AAY beneficiaries stand at 2,90,989, who received rice at Rs 3 per kg. Each household received 35 kg of rice. Under the Priority House Hold (PHH), 3,51,305 households with 18,54,156 beneficiaries received 5 kg of rice per head at Rs 3 per kg.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the AAY and PHH beneficiaries are also getting 5 kg of rice and one kg of pulses free of cost. They will get this assistance for April, May and June.

Manipur Govt steps up vigil in Churachandpur dist

CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL, April 23: The Manipur Government has stepped up vigil in Churachandpur district along the Indo-Myanmar border to contain the possible spread of novel coronavirus, official sources said today. The international boundary stretches from Border Pillar No. 32 to No. 48, running a distance of 79.5 km. The terrain is rugged and mountainous, and the Santui, Tuivai and Tuivai rivers form the natural border.

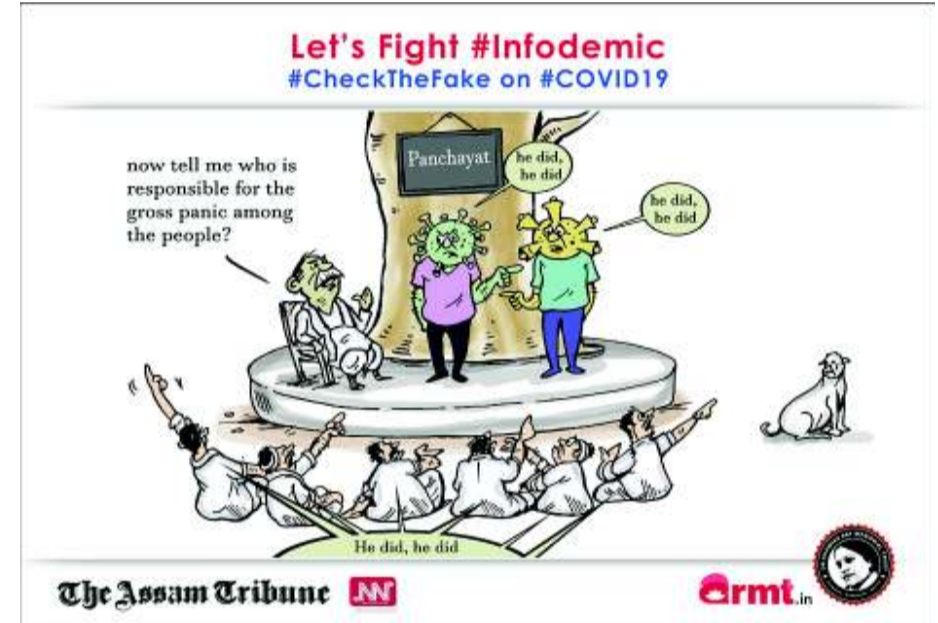
The District Information Officer (DIO) of Churachandpur said that patrolling has been intensified to check cross-border movement of people. Besides, awareness is being generated among the people residing on the border by the Churachandpur Police in coordination with the civil administration, Assam Rifles and other security agencies.

Regular patrolling activities are being conducted by personnel of the Behiang Police Station and the Singnat Police Station in coordination with the Assam Rifles, the DIO stated in a press release. One additional company of the IRB has been deployed since April 22, it added.

Meanwhile, the SDPO of Churachandpur has been camping at the Behiang Police Station to supervise all activities along the border, in coordination with the Assam Rifles.

Moreover, the police, civil officials and doctors are holding meetings to educate villagers on the measures taken to fight COVID-19 and the importance of sealing all entry and exit points on the border.

On April 16, Suhel Akhtar, Additional Chief Secretary, accompanied by the DC of Churachandpur Pawan Yadav and SP Amrita Sinha visited Pakmual, a border village, to monitor enforcement of lockdown restrictions in the area.



No mask, no vegetables: vendors

AGARTALA, April 23: Stepping up efforts to halt the spread of COVID-19, traders in Agartala have asserted that they would not sell items to customers who flout social distancing norms or visit their shops without putting on masks.

At the Maharaj Ganj market, a wholesale mart for vegetables here, a display board has been put up, stating that customers without masks would not be entertained.

Nakul Das, a member of the Maharaj Ganj Bazaar Sabzee Byabaysi Samiti, said, "Wholesalers and retailers have decided that they will strictly abide

by the norms laid down by the Government. No exceptions will be made."

Gouranga Pal, a vegetable vendor, said he has turned down requests of several customers over the past few days as they "refused to follow social distancing norms".

"We have decided to sell our products only to those who maintain safe distance and wait for their turns patiently. It makes our work easier," he said. Similar measures have also been taken by vendors in Battala and Lake Chowmuhani market.

Police and Tripura State

Rifles personnel have been deployed at all marketplaces to prevent crowding. Petrol pumps across the city have also adopted the 'no mask, no fuel' policy.

Debabrata Ghosh, manager of the Radhanagar Petrol Pump here, said, "We are just adhering to the decision taken by the All India Petroleum Dealers Association, which has 84 per cent of all fuel dealers in the country registered with them. Accordingly, we have also launched a campaign and asked the dealers to sensitise people about the importance of wearing masks." - PTI

Khongjom Day observed in Manipur

CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL, April 23: In remembrance of the brave sons of the soil who fought valiantly in the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891, the Khongjom Day was observed today at the Khongjom War Memorial Complex at Khebaching in Thoubal district.

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh led a small team comprising ministers, MLAs, government officers, police personnel and the public in laying wreaths on the war memorial and the statue of Paona Brajabasi.

Among those present on the occasion were Health Minister L Jayantakumar, Consumers Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Minister Karam Shyam, Tribal Affairs Hills and Fishery Minister N Kayisii, MLAs P Brojen, Y Surchandra, ex-MLA M Hemanta, Chief Secretary Dr J Suresh Babu and DGPLM Khaute. They also offered tar-



Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh paying homage on Paona Brajabasi's statue in Thoubal district on Thursday.

pan on the bank of the Khongjom river.

The 'Last Post' was also played as part of the observance. The Khongjom Day being a State holiday, almost all the State Government offices remained closed today.

Unlike the previous years, the day was observed in a subdued manner in view of the current situation arising out of the lockdown due to the COVID-

19 outbreak. The Thoubal district administration maintained social distancing during the programme.

The Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee also observed the day at its party office here. State Congress chief M Okendra, Congress Working Committee member Gaikhangam and others were present.

The day was also observed in other parts of the State.

Mon dist at forefront of COVID-19 battle



Volunteers attending a training programme on tackling COVID-19 at Mon town in Nagaland on Thursday. - Photo: Correspondent

BHADRA GOGOI

DIMAPUR, April 23: The Mon district of Nagaland that lies along the Indo-Myanmar border, has been at the forefront of the ongoing battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. Significantly, the district administration has taken a slew of measures in advance to combat the virus.

The Mon District COVID-19 War

Room was set up on April 10, four days before Nagaland Governor RN Ravi suggested it for all the districts. State Chief Secretary Temjen Toy directed all deputy commissioners to set up the District COVID-19 War Rooms on April 21.

Mon DC Thavaseelan K pointed out that the war room comprises officials from the district administration, police, Health and Family Welfare, and various line departments. It acts as a

single point for data collection and monitors people under quarantine on a daily basis, he added.

Thavaseelan said that 891 teams comprising village or ward-level task forces, ASHAs, ANMs, Anganwadi workers and teachers, were formed as a holistic response to the crisis. Though Mon district has not recorded any positive case so far, the district war room adopted an "active case search strategy" on April 13 to prevent any possible outbreak.

Every ward or village was divided into units of 50 households on the basis of the recent economic census, and a two-member team conducted surveys on symptoms, travel history, contacts with infected persons, etc. Thavaseelan said the data collection for every household in Mon district was completed on April 17.

Thavaseelan said four sub-divisional war rooms have been set up at Tobu, Aboi, Tizit and Naginimora subdivisions to function in tandem with the District COVID-19 War Room.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Officers of the CRPF's 10th Battalion F Coy distributing relief materials in Patacharkuchi on Wednesday. — Photo: Nava Kanta Kalita

MMB employee found dead

MORIGAON, April 23: Anal Kundu (23), an employee of Morigaon Municipal Board (MMB), was found dead in his room on Wednesday. Anal was a popular youth of Ward No.2 of Morigaon town. A sincere employee of MMB who served the people selflessly years together, his service during the lockdown period was commendable. The cause of the death is yet to be ascertained. Staff of MMB deeply mourned the death of Anal. — Correspondent

Earth Day observed

MORIGAON, April 23: Earth Day was observed in Morigaon yesterday by the members of Environment Protection Committee, Morigaon, Sabdakalpa, and Jivan Jeuti Krishak Sangha, Morigaon. Members of the organisations urged the people to maintain social distancing, cleanliness to prevent spread of the novel coronavirus. The members later launched a massive plantation programme along the bank of the Charon beel. The members later distributed food packets to 30 BPL families. — Correspondent

School buildings damaged

GOSSAIGAON, April 23: Several school buildings and houses were damaged by a high-speed wind that lashed many parts of Gossaigaon subdivision on April 21. The wind also uprooted trees and electric poles causing disruption of power supply. — ANN Service

Illicit liquor seized

JORHAT, April 23: The State Excise department, Jorhat branch conducted raids at different places of Boloma Tea Estate and Teok Pirakata under Teok Revenue Circle, and seized 35 litres of illicit liquor and 440 litres of raw materials. One person was arrested in this connection. — Staff Correspondent

Fund donation

GUWAHATI, April 23: Sundarpur Namghar Samiti has donated Rs 50,000 to the Chief Minister Relief Fund to fight the COVID-19, a press release stated. The Samiti also appealed to the people to strictly follow the lockdown announced by the Prime Minister.

Food packets distributed

MANGALDAI, April 23: The Uttar Pub Mangaldai Sarvajanin Durga Puja Committee and Uttamjyoti Club of ward No.3, Mangaldai town on Tuesday distributed packets of food among 300 poor and needy families. Similarly, Dr Anil Sarma of Mangaldai Civil Hospital with the help of his family distributed aid to several families in his native village Rangamati. — Correspondent

Shortage of LPG cylinders

TIHU, April 23: The people of Tihu subdivision have been facing shortage of LPG cylinders for the last few days that has become a matter of concern for the people. It needs to be mentioned here that Ganesh Agency, which has 26,000 consumers, requires nearly 12,000 cylinders per month. But this time, IOCL has supplied only 5,028 cylinders, causing shortage of cylinders. — ANN Service

Donation by retd teachers

GUWAHATI, April 23: The Association of Retired Teachers of Arya Vidyaapeeth College has contributed Rs 1.20 lakh to Assam Arogya Nidhi to help the state fight against the coronavirus pandemic, stated a press release. The association's secretary Dr Nilima Goswami and treasurer Dr Dipti Khaund handed over a cheque to Health Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Surendra Mohan Deka: a tribute

Surendra Mohan Deka, a retired Judicial Officer, Legal Remembrancer cum Law Secretary to the Government of Assam, breathed his last on April 13 following old-age ailments. He was 87.

Born on March 1, 1933 at Chenga at Barpeta district, Deka studied at Government Barpeta High School and later came to Guwahati and studied science at Cotton College. After his BSc, he moved to then Calcutta for higher studies and obtained Master's in Science from Calcutta University. On returning home, he studied in the then Government Law College, Earle College.

He joined the chamber of law practitioner Kironmoyee Lahiri, who was later appointed as Judge of the Gauhati High Court and later as the Chief Justice. During his legal practice, Deka also worked as a part-time lecturer at University Law College.

He later cleared the Judicial Service Examination, and joined as Assistant District Judge at Dhubri in 1973. He rose to the position of District and Sessions Judge and served in

many districts across the state. He was later chosen for the post of Legal Remembrancer cum Law Secretary to the Government of Assam, and retired on superannuation in 1992.

After his retirement, he was called in to impart training to young Judicial Officers in the North East Judicial Officers Training Institute (NEJOTI), sponsored by all the Northeastern states.

Deka was later entrusted with the post of Director, which he held till 2015, when he voluntarily tendered his resignation due to his frail health.

The Government of Assam, in recognition of his expertise in legal matters, later appointed him as a member in the 6th Pay Revision Commission of Assam.

Deka, who was also a prolific writer and contributed many write-ups on legal topics in local and national legal journals, is survived by his wife, two sons, a daughter, and several grandchildren. On the day of his adyashradha, we pray to the Almighty to grant eternal peace to the departed soul. — Uddhab Chandra Rabha

AASU seeks DC's intervention over fee demand by schools

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, April 23: The Jorhat district unit of AASU has sought the intervention of the Jorhat district administration regarding some private schools of the district reportedly asking parents of students to pay fees during the lockdown period.

The student body has submitted a memorandum to the Jorhat Deputy Commissioner, urging the top official to take note of the matter raised by the AASU and stop those private schools asking to pay fees within the lockdown period.

AASU Assistant General Secretary (Jorhat district unit) Bijoy Shankar Bordoloi told this newspaper that it has come to the notice of the student body that a few private schools were sending WhatsApp messages to parents and guardians asking for paying admission fees, monthly fees and other miscellaneous

fees during lockdown period

He said that in view of the lockdown, people were facing a lot of difficulties especially on the financial front, and the schools should not force parents to pay fees and provide some relaxation.

Bordoloi, who is also the advisor of the Jorhat regional unit of the AASU, said the memorandum has been signed by Jorhat AASU regional unit president Arjunmoni Bhuyan and general secretary Partha Pratim Bora.

Jorhat admin relaxes norms for shops: The Jorhat district administration has granted permission to certain categories of shops to open two days in a week by imposing a few restrictions.

An order passed by an Additional Deputy Commissioner on Wednesday stated that as per the directive of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the State Government, shops selling hardware materials, electrical goods, stationery items, sanitary materials, agricul-

tural machinery and spare parts, fertilizers, pesticides and seeds in Jorhat district, are allowed to open on two days fixed area-wise by the administration under certain conditions.

The order said the shops will open from 1 pm to 5 pm on the fixed days locality-wise with bare minimum staff — up to maximum of 50 per cent of the total number.

Shopkeepers will have to ensure compliance of social distancing of at least one metre and maintaining of hygiene practices like handwashing and sanitizing frequently among the staff members and customers, the order mentioned.

The order further stated that wearing of masks, handgloves by the staff members of the shops was compulsory and spitting was strictly prohibited.

Individual passes for staff members of the shops and vehicles, if used, will have to be obtained from E-Pass Cell, Jorhat, the order said.

CM visits LPG bottling plant

ANN SERVICE

MIRZA, April 23: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Wednesday visited the IOCL Sarpara LPG Bottling Plant near Mirza and took stock of the daily capacity of the plant.

He also held a meeting with the officials of the LPG Bottling Plant and reviewed the daily capacity of the plant.

According to a report, the state has seven bottling plants scattered in various places, which have the capacity to fill over 1,70,000 LPG cylinders per day during the lockdown period, and the existing capacity has been enhanced to meet the requirement of the consumers.

Officials of IOCL apprised the Chief Minister that bottling plant located at Sarpara has been producing around 16,910 cylinders per day during the lockdown as against the normal filling of 14,085 cylinders in the plant.

Sonowal was accompanied by Guwahati Development Minister Siddhartha Bhattacharya, Palasbari MLA Pranab Kalita, Kamrup DC Kamal Kumar Baishya, Kamrup SP Partha Sarathi Mahanta and other officials.

The Chief Minister also directed the officials of the plant to ensure smooth supply of LPG cylinders to the people. He interacted with the workers of the plant and expressed gratitude for their efforts in enhancing the capacity during the lockdown period.

Later, talking to mediapersons, Sonowal informed that he reviewed the production of the plant at this critical hour. "The existing capacity has been enhanced so that people can get hassle-free service," he said.

He appealed to the people to maintain social distancing to prevent spread of the novel coronavirus. He later planted a sapling at the campus of the bottling plant.

Sonowal was accompanied by Guwahati Development Minister Siddhartha Bhattacharya, Palasbari MLA Pranab Kalita, Kamrup DC Kamal Kumar Baishya, Kamrup SP Partha Sarathi Mahanta and other officials.

Casual tea labourers, daily wage earners pushed to the edge

CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOOMA, April 23: Casual tea garden labourers and those who earn on a daily basis in the tea belt of Doomdooma circle have been facing severe economic hardship due to the ongoing lockdown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Though the tea gardens here resumed operation from April 12, they are yet to engage their full labour force due to government guidelines of running the gardens with 50 per cent workers. Following this government instruction, the tea companies are now engaging only their permanent work force, which has pushed the casual workers to extreme economic hardship.

During the plucking season, tea gardens need a huge labour force and hence the tea companies engage a good number of labourers on casual basis. During the off season, these labourers engage themselves in various other jobs on daily wage basis. Most of them work in construction sites.

Moreover, another section of people belonging to the tea garden community here do not work in the tea industry and are engaged in various other manual jobs on daily wage basis.

Significantly, a majority of the casual tea labourers and daily wage earners are excluded from the public distribution system.

Though a section of tea labourers, both permanent and casual, having Prime Minister's Jan Dhan Yojana account, have received Rs 500 each, but another section do not have this account.

Moreover, when prices of essential commodities have been rising by leaps and bounds, Rs 500 is nothing for a family of 6-7 people. On the other hand, though the government has announced that those who do not have ration card



or bank account will be given Rs 1,000 each, but many such people of Doomdooma circle informed this Correspondent that they did not get that amount. Hence, they are now at sea.

"I used to work as a *jugali* (helper) with a mason on daily wage basis. But since the last 25 days, I have no work. I have got 25 kg rice from the government ration card. But only rice is not enough for survival. The government should think about people like us," said Bijoy Bhumij, a daily wage earner of Beesakopie Trolley Line.

"I used to work as a domestic help in a household in Doomdooma town and thus I use to manage my three-member family. But when the lockdown was imposed, I could not go to work. I am therefore facing a severe crisis in maintaining my family. The government should consider our plight," Geeta Kour of Doomdooma said.

Talking to this correspondent, Doomdooma MLA Durga Bhumij said, "Though the government has an-

nounced Rs 1,000 to each family which does not have any ration card, people in Doomdooma LAC area are not getting this benefit. Only a few people have got this amount."

Bhumij therefore urged the administration to undertake a proper survey in Doomdooma LAC area to find out the poor families without ration card.

In the meantime, severe economic hardship has led to various anti-social activities like theft in certain areas of Doomdooma circle.

In a desperate bid to overcome the crisis situation, a few people have even started digging out the bricks used to construct rural roads and sell them for some amount of money. On Sunday night, many bricks along a rural lane of Daimukhia Gaon under Doomdooma PS were dug out and stolen.

"If the government does not take immediate steps to help the poor people, the social environment in these areas would worsen even further," speculated a local youth of Daimukhia Gaon.

Villagers demand embankments

ANN SERVICE

TIHU, April 23: The flood-hit farmers of nearly 30 villages under Banekuchi and Pachim Nalbari revenue circle have strongly demanded construction of embankments on the banks of the Buradia river, which flows through Nalbari district.

It may be mentioned here that every year, the *sali* cultivation of the farmers are washed away by the flood waters of the Buradia river. Besides, during the rainy season, the whole area is submerged by the flood waters affecting the *sali* cultivation

due to lack of embankments on both sides of the river.

Several areas, including Kharsitha, Ralisaghat, Pachim Balijar, Nadla, Banekuchi, Rajaghat, Pahlongpara and Purni have been witnessing severe erosion.

In this connection, the poor farmers of the areas have demanded the State Government for construction of embankments on the bank of the Buradia river as early as possible in order to save the families and also have requested the Agriculture department to assist them with the supply of seeds and other materials.

10 bookstalls reopen in Mangaldai

CORRESPONDENT

MANGALDAI, April 23: Ten bookstalls dealing with textbooks have reopened in Darrang district in the greater interest of students. The district administration granted permission to the book stalls of Mangaldai town to open for three days a week from 10 am to 1 pm. In separate orders issued by Additional Deputy Commissioner Nabajyoti Oja on Wednesday, these bookstalls were allowed to open from Wednesday to Friday, subject to the fulfillment of adopting social distancing and other safety measures with limited staff as per guidelines of Assam COVID-19 Regulations, 2020 under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1987 for prevention and containment of COVID-19. These bookstalls are Jnan Mandir, Assam Book Stall, Jnanjyoti Book Stall, Kitap Kanan, Golden Book Centre, Rumi Store, Chakravarty Book Stall, Sarathi Book Stall, Ram Dhenu Book Stall and New Book Stall.

1,216 people under quarantine in Dhemaji

ANN SERVICE

DHEMAJI, April 23: The Dhemaji district administration has taken a slew of steps to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus in the district.

According to a report received from Bharat Konwar, District Information and Public Relation Officer, 2,562 persons were kept under quarantine in different hospitals in the district. Out of them, 2,285 completed 14-day quarantine and were released.

On the other hand, the rest 267 persons who have not completed 14-day quarantine are still in different hospitals under quarantine. In that way, a total number of 1,216 persons are still under home quarantine. According to official sources, 104 suspected persons' swabs were sent to ICMR, Lahowal, Dibrugarh for COVID-19 test and the results were negative, while the results of two other persons are awaited.

Arunachal agrees to reconstruct Zubeen Garg Setu

CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOOMA, April 23: Following strong protest and resentment after Arunachal Pradesh Police allegedly dismantled a portion of the Zubeen Garg Setu, the bamboo bridge constructed over the river Noa-Dihing recently, to curb the movement of people during the lockdown period, the Namsai district administration of Arunachal Pradesh, after initially denying its involvement in the act, has finally agreed to reconstruct the bridge in the post-lockdown period.

Moreover, the Arunachal Pradesh administration has also agreed to al-

low plying of boats across the river for communication to Tengapani village during the lockdown period. The bridge connects Tengapani village of Assam situated along the border of Arunachal Pradesh with the rest of Assam. The Tinsukia district administration will also cooperate in reconstruction of the bridge.

This decision was taken at a meeting held at the conference hall of the Deputy Commissioner's office of Tinsukia district on Tuesday. The meeting was chaired by Tinsukia DC Bhaskar Pegu and was attended by Sadiya MLA Bolin Chetia, Namsai DC Bijoy Talukder, Namsai Superintendent of Police Ankit Kumar Singh, Sadi-

ya Superintendent of Police BL Meena, All Moran Students' Union (AMSU) central committee president Arunjoyoti Moran, secretary Naba Moran, Tengapani Gaonburhah Sarat Chetia, Thepabari village representative Nirmal Handique and others.

After the meeting, Sarat Chetia told this correspondent, "Ultimately, the administrations took a decision to reconstruct the bridge. The construction work will start from May 4. On behalf of the villagers, I would like to thank *The Assam Tribune* for publishing the news."

"Today's discussion was very cordial. Besides the issue of the bridge, several other issues like demarcation

of boundary between both the states, survey of land in both the states along the border, development issues of the border areas were also discussed in the meeting. The administrations of both the districts agreed to send proposals in these matters to the higher authorities of their respective governments," said AMSU president Arunjoyoti Moran.

It may be mentioned here that Sadiya MLA Bolin Chetia took the initiative and arranged the meeting on Tuesday. Chetia also visited the bridge and talked to the local people of Tengapani and Thepabari village and also of the meeting held at the Tinsukia DC office.



Masks being distributed to shopkeepers by the members of the Bakaliaghat Town Committee on Thursday. — UB Photos

OBITUARY

Rina Borah

GUWAHATI, April 23: Rina Borah (Smriti), a resident of Jaitia, Kahilipara, died on April 19 at the residence of her youngest daughter at Mumbai. She was 64.

Borah was associated with the Krishnaguru International Spiritual Women's Society, and served as general secretary for eight years. She was also a Bhagawati (reciter of Srimad Bhagawat) of Krishnaguru Sewashram. She leaves behind her husband, a son and two daughters.

Kiranbala Bora

CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOOMA, April 23: Kiranbala Bora, a popular and pious lady of Jonaki Path, Lachit Nagar at

Rupai Siding here, breathed her last at her residence on Wednesday evening. She was 78. She leaves behind two sons, two daughter and a host of relatives. She was closely associated with the Lachit Nagar Naamghar and Doomdooma Naamghar. Her death was widely mourned at Rupai Siding.



Spreading hope

Papon's new Assamese song aims at spreading positivity

Singer Papon has come out with a new Assamese song, *Paar hoboi aei xomoy*, which translates to "This time too shall pass".

Papon, who has a cult following in Bollywood thanks to his melodies like *Jyein kyun*, *Kaun mera* and *Moh moh ke dhaage*, says it is a universal song for hope and faith.

After receiving a positive response to his three-day online concert "Bohaag 2020", Papon decided to come up with the song. The song has been composed and sung by Papon. He also shot a video himself on his phone at home.

"I received overwhelming response to the in-house concert for Rongali Bihu. The way everyone is fighting this difficult situation is very inspiring, and staying positive is the need of the hour, which lead to this song. It aims at spreading positivity and a ray of hope," Papon said.

Asked about his decision to make the song in Assamese, Papon said: "Music has no boundaries, it itself is a language."

"There have been songs in various foreign languages that we tend to not understand but we will enjoy the sound, the music. This song has good music and the video is with English subtitles. My first language, mother-tongue is Assamese. Since my college days in Delhi till now I have always been appreciated whenever I sing in the language. I think people like its phonetics, so why not a song in Assamese, this is a universal song for hope and faith, and I hope it serves its purpose," he added.

Papon earlier released a video of a 14-year-old song *Din guzein woh* for fans during the lockdown period. "A friend of mine, Ronnie Lahiri, posted the audio of this song on social media that I had created 14 years back. I have always loved this song as it was one of my first compositions," said Papon. "I got re-inspired and made a video... The song is apt for all of us since we are at home. I hope everyone enjoys this special song," he added.

Papon has also teamed up with legendary lyricist and poet Gulzar for a single. "I feel really blessed to be working with Gulzar saab. He is writing one song. He showed so much love to me and said 'Beta aur karte hai (let's do more). If I will write for you, then my health will be good,'" Papon said.

The singer also got the "biggest compliment" from the veteran lyricist. "He said 'Mere zindagi ka jo graph hai... jiske saath kaam kia woh complete nahi hota agar Papon ke saath kaam nahi karta' (My life's graph would have been incomplete had I not worked with Papon). It's a nice high. I got that extra boost," he added.

On his other songs, he said, "I am also working on 500-600-year-old music from Assam. It's like classical music. It hasn't been documented, more like passed on by word of mouth. I have been interviewing people about it for the last three years. I am making a film on it."

(Source: IANS)

Kids

Cartoon Network

- 12:00 Oogy And The Cook...
- 12:30 The Tom & Jerry Show
- 13:00 Tom And Jerry: Back to Oz
- 13:30 Oogy And The Cook...
- 21:30 The Tom & Jerry Show
- 22:30 Courage, Cowardly Dog
- 23:00 Ben 10
- 23:30 Teleshopping

Tom & Jerry

Cartoon Network

- 12:00 Chhota Bheem
- 12:30 Grizzy And The Lemm...
- 13:00 Chhota Bheem
- 14:30 Grizzy And The Lemm...
- 15:30 Chhota Bheem
- 16:30 Chhota Bheem Neeli...
- 17:30 Chhota Bheem
- 18:30 Chhota Bheem Neeli...
- 20:00 Super Bheem
- 21:00 Grizzy And The Lemm...
- 22:00 Mr. Bean: The Animated...
- 23:00 M.A.D.
- 23:30 Teleshopping

Entertainment

Colors

- 20:00 Love Island UK
- 21:00 World Of Dance
- 22:00 Penny Dreadful
- 23:00 Love Island UK

Star Plus

- 12:00 Barrister Babu
- 12:30 Naati Pinky Ki Lambi
- 13:00 Choti Sarraamii
- 13:30 Barrister Babu
- 14:30 Fear Factor Khatorn Ke
- 16:30 Choti Sarraamii
- 17:00 Naati Pinky Ki Lambi
- 17:30 Pavitra Bhagya
- 18:00 Barrister Babu
- 18:30 Shubharamah
- 19:00 Vidya
- 19:30 Choti Sarraamii
- 20:00 Shakti Asitva Ke Ehsas Ki
- 20:30 Barrister Babu
- 21:00 Shubharamah
- 21:30 Naati Pinky Ki Love Story
- 22:00 Pavitra Bhagya
- 22:30 Mujhs Shadi Karoge

Sony

- 12:00 Best Of Crime Patrol

Zcafe

- 12:00 Resident Evil: Afterlife
- 14:00 Love Island UK
- 15:00 The King Of Queens
- 17:00 Love Island UK
- 18:00 Penny Dreadful
- 19:00 Everybody Hates Chris

Movies

UTV MOVIES

- 11:25 Kick
- 14:15 Jai Karni Waise Bhami
- 17:10 The State vs Jolly LLB2
- 19:50 Dangal
- 23:10 Waah! Teri Kya Kehna

UTV ACTION

- 12:00 X-Men: Days of Future Past
- 14:40 Moana
- 16:30 Mard The Khiladi
- 19:00 12 Disaster
- 20:55 Spider-Man 3
- 23:45 Predators

HBO

- 10:55 World War Z
- 12:50 Snakes on a Plane
- 14:30 Aquaman
- 17:05 The Italian Job
- 18:50 Ocean's Thirteen
- 21:00 The Hangover Part II
- 22:40 Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows: Part 1

HBO

- 21:00 The Hangover Part II

STAR MOVIES

- 23:40 Six Days Seven Nights

Infotainment

NAT GEO WILD

- 12:00 Africa's Wild Side
- 13:00 Wild Families
- 14:00 Wolves of Yellowstone
- 15:00 Survival Of The Fittest
- 16:00 The Lakeshore Killers
- 17:00 Built For The Kill
- 18:00 World's Weirdest

Animal Planet

- 12:00 Wild Frank
- 12:40 Just Animals
- 13:25 Animals Unleashed
- 13:40 How Do Animals Do That
- 14:10 Deadly Bites
- 14:55 Fierce Fighters
- 15:55 Modern Dinosaurs
- 16:55 Monkeys Revealed
- 17:55 Jewels Of The Natural
- 18:30 Super Senses
- 18:55 Animal Planet: Exclusives
- 19:55 Wildest Survival
- 21:00 Friday Blockbusters
- 22:00 Wild Frank
- 23:00 Killer Instincts
- 23:25 The Cute Ones

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL

- 12:00 Snakes in The City
- 13:00 Running Wild/Bear Grylls
- 14:00 Adventure: Primal Survivor

PRIMAL SURVIVOR

- 15:00 Science of Stupid

Regional

NEWS LIVE

- 07:00 Breakfast Live
- 08:00 Live at 8
- 09:00 Good morning Assam
- 10:00 Assamese news
- 11:30 Kotha Barta (R)
- 12:00 Mid Day Live
- 13:00 Assamese Telefilm
- 14:30 Afternoon Prime
- 17:30 Guwahati Biseesh
- 18:00 Guwahati Live
- 18:30 Breaking @ 6:30
- 19:00 Assamese Prime Time
- 21:00 Discussion Show
- 22:00 Super Prime Time
- 23:00 Live at 10
- 23:30 Noix Guwahati
- 23:00 Noix Batori

rain

- 17:00 Xopun
- 17:30 Barala Kai
- 18:30 Xopunor Aasutia Rang
- 20:00 Jonaki Kareng
- 20:30 Xopun
- 21:00 Chhokhpa
- 21:30 Bah Amarawati Bah
- 22:00 Borola Kai

Sports

- 21:30 Football United Special
- 22:30 IPL Hls
- 23:00 Indi vs Aus ODI Hls
- 23:30 Hero ISL Hls

18:30 IPL Hls

- 19:00 Jai Ho
- 20:00 IPL Hls
- 21:00 Jai Ho
- 22:00 Football United Special
- 23:00 IPL Hls
- 23:30 Ind vs Aus ODI Hls
- 23:30 Hero ISL

18:30 IPL Hls

- 19:00 Jai Ho
- 20:00 IPL Hls
- 21:00 Jai Ho

STAR MOVIES

- 23:40 Six Days Seven Nights

2

- 12:40 Loafer The Hero
- 14:50 Pardesi
- 17:30 Mera Thikana
- 19:45 Lal Baadshah
- 22:35 Tiger One Man Army

10:20 Hiraasat

- 13:05 Meha
- 16:40 Sai Teri Maya
- 19:00 Money Hai To Honey Hai
- 22:00 Samral The Warrior

11:25 Stree

- 14:30 Singham
- 17:25 Coolie No. 1
- 19:55 Total Dhamaal
- 22:45 The Real Jackpot

12:10 Simmba

- 15:00 No. 1 Businessman
- 18:10 The Real Tear

11:25 Stree

- 14:30 Singham
- 17:25 Coolie No. 1
- 19:55 Total Dhamaal
- 22:45 The Real Jackpot

12:10 Simmba

- 15:00 No. 1 Businessman
- 18:10 The Real Tear

Know your DAY

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Friday, April 24, 2020:

Nurturing and protective you makes sure all your loved ones are healthy. You spend this year being creative or enjoying solitary hobbies such as music or art. You ensure finances are stable. If single, you especially enjoy exchanging messages with a new prospect who has suddenly caught your eye. If attached, resist the temptation to give direction all the time. You married an independent person who gives you a lot of happiness. CAPRICORN speaks their mind.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ It's a wonderful day to boost earning power through experimenting with creative ideas. Devotion to your finances promises deep satisfaction in the long run. A partner decides to upset the status quo. Insist upon balance and respect. Tonight: Pay bills first.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ A cycle of frantic activity and competition reaches its end. Take some time to revel in the peace and quiet of nature. Let go of that which you have fought a partner over. It is finished. A child needs extra time. Tonight: Just as you like.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Replenish your vitality by taking time to rest and regroup. Become focused on a small project. You can complete it with aplomb by day's end. Write a dream journal. You will be surprised at how much wisdom you glean from it. Tonight: Early beddie byes.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Disputes with a partner can be resolved through the mediation of mutual friends. Groups are lucky for you today, including an organization that plans to ask you to become a member. Write down your highest wishes and goals. Tonight: Catch up with friends online.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Suggestions that you resist at first can prove to be valuable in the end. A close companion has multiple projects in process. Discussion will dispel confusion. You will have an opportunity to influence the course of action. Tonight: Network with higher-ups.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Purchase books and consider joining an online class in your interested study. Friends can seem quite opinionated. Help a comrade direct anger in a constructive way. Choose new associates with discretion today. Tonight: Watch a documentary on a foreign country.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ It can be a little difficult to concentrate today. Follow a schedule combined with positive affirmations. Ask others to rephrase if the meaning of their words is not clear. This is especially true if you are asking about instructions. Tonight: An early bedtime.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Even when you are with another, you can feel alone. It is part and parcel of being born a Scorpio. But today an existing relationship moves to a new level, and this makes you very happy. In this new time, happiness is needed. Tonight: Date night.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Seek creative ways to enjoy leisure hours at home without jeopardizing your freedom. Do not argue about finances with a child or other loved ones. Resolve to enjoy all that you already have in your home and in your domestic routine. Tonight: Slow down.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ An email or phone call could mark the beginning of an intriguing new romance. Today brings an important development. For once in many years, throw caution to the wind and declare yourself to be open to love. Tonight: No obsessing.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Psychic bonds between parents and children strengthen. Wry, subtle humor will appeal. Work on home-related projects together, with lavish praise given to every individual. You will finish something by tonight of which you will all be very proud. Tonight: Celebrate.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Use humor and good listening skills today. A loved one may be, quite frankly, freaking out from the pandemic scenario and you are needed to be the calm one. Your cleverness and eloquence enable you to succeed. Tonight: Catch up with a brother or sister.

Thought for the day

Have a heart that never hardens, and a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts.

- CHARLES DICKENS

LOCKHORNS

By Lee Falk

THE PHANTOM

BLONDIE

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

Tribune CROSSWORD - 6876

1		2	3	4	5	6
			7			
8						
9						
10						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						
28						
29						
31						
33						

Across

- 1 Seller of food (6)
- 7 Imperil (8)
- 8 Immense (4)
- 10 Looked lasciviously at (6)
- 11 Islands in the N Atlantic (6)
- 14 King in Latin (3)
- 16 Hop-drying kilns (5)
- 17 Scare away (4)
- 19 Intoxicated (5)
- 21 Indian corn (5)
- 22 Capital of Vietnam (5)
- 23 Stringed instrument (4)
- 26 Constellation (5)
- 28 In short,

Down

- 1 Questions thoroughly (6)
- 2 A red wine (6)
- 3 "Retired" in short? (4)
- 4 Folded over pizza (7)
- 5 Lab gels (5)
- 6 Dozen dozens (5)
- 8 Miles from Hollywood (4)
- 9 The fair ____: the females? (3)
- 12 Acorn bearer (3)
- 13 Anaesthetic gas (5)
- 15 Earlier (5)
- 18 Wispy clouds (5)
- 19 Son of Jacob (3)
- 20 Israeli gun (3)
- 21 State neighbouring Assam (7)
- 22 Pig (3)
- 23 A young cow (6)
- 24 Incite by encouragement (4)
- 25 Flower parts (6)
- 26 Egg-shaped body (5)
- 27 Bugged, irritated (5)
- 28 Sick-day cause (3)
- 30 River of Hades (4)

SOLUTION TO TRIBUNE CROSSWORD - 6876

28 Flu, 30 Hox, 28 Manpuz, 22 Hog, 23 Heiter, 24 Abel, 25 Felas, 26 Ovoid, 27 liked, Vera, 9 Sex, 12 Ether, 15 Pion, 18 Cirr, 19 Dan, 20 Uzi, 21 Down, 1 Gillit, 2 Claret, 3 Rabel, 4 Calzone, 5 Avars, 6 Cross, 8 Oron, 28 Feb, 29 Virgin, 30 Slast, 31 Tur, 32 Inquity, 33 Kexas, 16 Gasts, 17 Ccat, 19 Durak, 21 Malze, 22 Hanoi, 23 Harp, 26 Alex, 1 Grocer, 7 Emdanger, 8 Vast, 10 Loered, 11 Azores, 14

HEALTH CAPSULES®

by Bron Smith

WHAT DOES THE HEALTHY DIET OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS CONSIST OF?

a PESCO-VEGETARIAN & VEGETARIAN WHO EATS FISH.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS EAT A VEGAN OR PESCO-VEGETARIAN DIET, AVOIDING PORK AND SHELLFISH. THEY CONSUME NUTS, BEANS, AVOCADOS, OATMEAL AND WHOLE WHEAT BREAD. THEY AVOID ALCOHOL, AND THEY DRINK SOY MILK.

Health Capsules is not intended to be of a diagnostic nature.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given cup.

TREFA

ABURS

EGIWNT

AEERSP

_____ were invented to make children happy by giving them something to ignore. - Ogden Nash (7)

SOLUTION

Answer: Parents were invented to make children happy by giving them something to ignore. - Ogden Nash (7)



Struggling to keep body and soul together, a minor girl tries to cook a meal as her house lies in ruins following the thunderstorm which devastated Tengakhat Nepali Gaon in Dibrugarh district, on Wednesday. — UB Photos

4 held for killing leopard

CORRESPONDENT

DERGAON, April 23: Four persons from Tarfad Ahomgaon were arrested by Golaghat police in connection with alleged killing of a leopard on Thursday.

Thagiram Gogoi (56), Nityananda Saikia (50), Jonemom Gogoi (32) and Raktim Gogoi (28) were arrested by a team led by Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) along with Golaghat police at around 4 in the morning.

It may be mentioned here that the carcass of the leopard was recovered on April 18.

It was earlier alleged that the leopard was killed by a section of villagers and they had plans to consume it. However, later they buried the body of the leopard in a jungle.

Meanwhile after receiving information, Golaghat police recovered the carcass and sent it for post-mortem.

Finally, the team led by DFO Bhaskar Deka along with Golaghat police arrested the duo and interrogation is on.

The DFO Bhaskar Deka told this correspondent that the accused would be produced before the court later.

"We are investigating the matter seriously and no accused will escape from our net," the DFO said. During the lockdown, several such cases of hunting of wild animals in the district have been reported.

Emergency centre opened

CORRESPONDENT

HAILAKANDI, April 23: The district administration of Hailakandi has set up District Emergency Operation Centre to facilitate the travel of stranded citizens to different parts of the State due to nationwide lockdown. Disclosing this on Thursday, Deputy Commissioner, Keerthi Jalli said e-passes for inter-district travel would be issued only for the next three days from Saturday to Monday. The administration has also given three contact numbers for any travel-related query. It further said those in need of vehicle support may call on 104 and those who have their own vehicle can apply for e-pass by logging hailakandi.gov.in.



Labourers washing their hands and covering their faces with masks during a COVID-19 awareness workshop organized by the Assam Police at Naharoni Tea Estate, Rangapara of Sonitpur district, on Thursday. — UB Photos

CM takes stock of COVID-19 preparedness in Sadiya subdivision

ABHIJIT KHATANIAR

CHAPAKHOWA (SADIYA), April 23: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal visited Chapakhowa, the headquarter of Sadiya subdivision in Tinsukia district on Thursday afternoon. The Chief Minister held a review meeting at the conference hall of SDO (Civil) office, Sadiya on the preparedness to combat COVID-19 in Sadiya subdivision and took stock of the prevailing situation arising out of the nationwide lockdown.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by the MP of Lakhimpur Lok Sabha seat Pradan Baruah, Sadiya MLA Bolin Chetia, Digboi MLA Suren Phukan and Tingkhong MLA Bimal Bora.

In the meeting, the Chief Minister collected ground report from various departments. He also took stock of availability of foodgrains in the subdivision.

Sonowal instructed the administration to keep the public distribution system smooth and transparent and to ensure that no person liv-

ing below the poverty line should suffer any hardship during this crisis.

The Chief Minister also suggested the local administration to look after the problems of the farmers and to make necessary arrangements of transportation of perishable Agri products to the local markets and if required to outside the district. Sonowal also directed the Health department officials to keep all records pertaining to COVID-19 preparedness in the subdivision as well as in the district.

Besides, the heads of all line departments, the meeting was also attended by Tinsukia DC Bhaskar Pegu, DIG (NER), Tinsukia Jitmol Doley, Tinsukia SP Siladitya Chetia, SP of Sadiya Police District BL Meena, SDO (Civil) Sadiya Shyamal Kheta Gogoi, SDO (Civil) Margherita Dibakar Nath and other senior police and civil officials of the district.

Briefing the media after the meeting, Sonowal said that the Health department of the State government had taken

adequate measures to combat COVID-19 pandemic and, as a result of these measures, the COVID patients of the State had been coming round gradually. He expressed satisfaction over the measures taken by the subdivisional administration of Sadiya in fighting against COVID-19 pandemic. He thanked the Health department personnel, police and the media for their leading role in fighting against the pandemic. He also thanked the people of the State for their support to the government in this fight.

While asked if the lockdown will be extended in the State, the Chief Minister said that in this regard the State government would follow the guidelines of the Centre.

The Mayamora Sanskritik Samaj of Tinsukia and Humijan Borgohain of Sadiya handed over a cheque of Rs 1,00,000 each to the Chief Minister for his relief fund. On the other hand, Uttar Sadiya Samabai Samity Ltd. donated Rs 20,000 and Paban Agarwal of Sadiya donated Rs 10,000 to the CM's relief fund.

Appeal to Muslims to follow lockdown guidelines during Ramzan

CORRESPONDENT

HAILAKANDI, April 23: Superintendent of Police of Hailakandi, Pabindra Kumar Nath has appealed to Muslims to strictly follow social distancing and lockdown guidelines during the holy month of Ramzan starting either on Friday or Saturday in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

Nath urged the Muslims to offer prayers and other religious rituals like the 'iftar' (breaking of fast) staying inside their homes during the month of Ramzan.

Nath appealed to various religious leaders, representatives of social and religious organisations to ensure that the people do not gather at religious and other places under any circumstances during Ramzan.

The Superintendent of Police said that in the wake of

proactive and positive efforts of local religious leaders and representatives of religious-social organisations, Muslims in the district observed Shabe-Barat on April 9 by offering prayers and performing all other religious rituals staying indoors.

Nath said that due to coronavirus pandemic, guidelines of lockdown and social distancing have to be followed religiously to break the chain of the dreaded virus that has caused ripples globally. "There is a need to make people aware during the unprecedented times so that they perform all the religious rituals inside their homes," he said.

"Any callousness on our part can be very harmful for our near and dear ones, the society and the country as a whole. We should strictly adhere to the guidelines of the government and administration to

fight tooth and nail against coronavirus," he asserted.

The district administration has assured the Muslim community that fruits and other items such as dates required for Ramzan would be made available during the lockdown.

Chief Adviser, North East Ahle Sunnat Wal Jammah, Moulana Sarimul Haque Laskar also appealed to the Muslims to pray and observe rituals like 'iftar' at home due to novel coronavirus outbreak.

All the religious activities at temples, mosques, gurdwaras, churches and other religious places in the country have been cancelled in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sonowal has also appealed to the Muslim community to observe the month-long fasting and rituals associated with Ramzan from the confines of their homes in view of COVID-19 situation.

Thunderstorm wreaks havoc in Dibrugarh, leaves trail of destruction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, April 23: A strong wind followed by thunderstorm caused massive damages to hundreds of people's houses, their granaries and livestock in different parts of the district last night.

Power supply has also been disrupted in the areas as electric poles were uprooted as also trees fell on the electric wires and on standing houses of the affected families.

District officials who are still continuing with assessment of the damages said that so far

1827 houses have been counted which were affected in some 93 villages across the district, of which some 580 families have been displaced as their houses have been fully destroyed.

Among six affected Revenue Circles, Dibrugarh West Revenue Circle remained the worst affected Revenue Circle with 624 houses partially damaged and with 478 houses fully destroyed. One Digaanta Dehingia of Sessa Nagaon reportedly sustained leg injury when a GI sheet flew off a house roof and hit his leg.

Trail of destruction was

seen today in Sessa Nagaon, Singibil, Kothalbam, 1 No. Lezai, Baruaogaon, Jugurubogaon, Bordoibam and 2 No. Dewan gaon, among others, in Larua mouza under the Dibrugarh West Revenue Circle. Gaonburha Pradip Dehingia of 2 No. Garudharia Lat told *The Assam Tribune* that almost nothing has been left unaffected. "Major harm was caused to people as trees fell on houses and on granaries. The storm first lashed the area for about an hour from 5 pm. We had assumed that the storm had subsided but sud-

dently the storm came back with major force at around 6:30 pm, uprooting trees, electric poles, houses and granaries. Several trees fell on houses, which caused major damages to our belongings inside the house as also to livestock," he said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Deepu Kumar Deka said that tarpaulins and other relief items have been rushed to the affected areas and assessment was continuing. Relief camps will be erected on need basis from tomorrow, he added.

Hail, thunderstorm destroy Muga plantations in Dhakuakhana

CORRESPONDENT

NORTH LAKHIMPUR, April 23: Strong winds with hail accompanied by hail lashed Dhakuakhana subdivision in Lakhimpur on Wednesday night destroying several Muga silk cultivation areas.

The thunderstorm which devastated the subdivision at 8 in the night, completely destroyed Muga plantations, many with live silkworms. The worst-hit areas are the villages under Gandhiya and Dhenudhora-Batomari Gaon Panchayat of Dhakuakhana where Somanis or Som plantations – host plant for Muga silkworms in more than 100

bighas of land were destroyed.

Noted Muga expert and national award winning agricultural entrepreneur Jitul Saikia was one of the rearers who lost the entire plantation of Som used for Muga worms. According to Saikia, more than 50 families of these two Gaon Panchayats lost their entire Som plantations in the thunderstorm. He roughly calculated that at least Rs 30 lakh worth Muga were lost in the natural disaster.

"Our Muga rearing has been pushed back to four years as a new plantation requires minimum four years to grow host plants for

Muga silkworms," said Saikia. This appears to be a double blow to the traditional Muga rearing families of Dhakuakhana as they could not do any business in the festive Bihu season due to ongoing lockdown.

The unprecedented thunderstorm and hails pulled down hundreds of trees of a wide area in Dhakuakhana destroying power cables and blocking many roads. The entire area is without electricity since Wednesday night because of this. Roofs of many houses were also blown away by the thunderstorm while many houses were destroyed by falling of trees.



Noted Muga expert Jitul Saikia in his destroyed Som plantation in Gharmora village in Batomari, Dhakuakhana, on Thursday. — Photo: Farhana Ahmed

SMCH set to resume general treatment services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SILCHAR, April 23: Following the announcement made by State Health Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma to reopen the medical colleges and district hospitals for general public, authorities of the Silchar Medical College and Hospital, which has been functioning as COVID-19 hospital, is all set to provide treatment to other patients from April 24.

Dr Bhaskar Gupta, Vice Principal of SMCH informed this on Thursday saying that on Friday, OPDs of all the four departments – Eye, ENT, Dermatology and Psychiatry shall be shifted back to SMCH from Silchar Civil Hospital.

"We have only one COVID-19 patient, who is Assam's first undergoing treatment at a separate ward and the zone has been kept absolutely safe and secured from thoroughfare. As per Government instructions,

we are hopeful to resume treatment of general patients from Friday and the OPDs of the four departments shall be brought back from Civil Hospital as well," Dr Gupta said.

Asked whether the Rapid Test kits have arrived at the hospital, Dr Gupta replied that they have made all arrangements for treating patients once they receive the Rapid Test kits. Treatment of general patients shall not be hampered, he maintained.

Food packets distributed among needy

CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI, April 23: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation (SSSO) has been distributing food packets to the needy throughout the country during the lockdown period, stated a press release.

The Sathya Sai Seva Samitis located in various parts of Assam under the SSSO of Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh have also taken steps in the same way to distribute food packets. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization (SSSO) of Guwa-

hati Samiti Jorpukhri distributed relief materials to 170 families of Umsru, Rajapara and Kathalguri (Umsru – 110, Rajapara – 44 and Kathalguri – 16) villages under Palasbari police station in Kamrup district on April 23.

The villages are about 40 kilometres away from LGBI Airport towards southern Assam-Meghalaya border and mainly people of Rabha community lives there. Besides Sri Sathya Sai Seva

Organization, Guwahati, a team of Assam Police assisted this relief mission. Similarly, Dhubri Samiti distributed food packets containing different food materials to 90 needy families in Dhubri on April 22, the Darmikhal Samiti of Cachar district distributed food packets to 35 families on April 22 and Silchar Samiti also distributed food packets on April 23, the release added.

Fear grips farmers following death of pigs in Tinsukia dist

CORRESPONDENT

DOOMDOOMA, April 23: Several cases of the death of pigs have been reported from several parts of Tinsukia district like Dangari, Balioni Aroimuria, Laika etc., during the past one week, which has spread fear among the pig farmers about suspected outbreak of swine fever. Though the Veterinary department officials did not rule out the death of pigs due to swine fever, they also cited other reasons like weather change, bacterial infection

and non-vaccination etc. When contacted, Dr Debananda Gogoi, the District Veterinary Officer of Tinsukia said, "pig farmers had hardly reported about the death of pigs, and many a times it became difficult to ascertain the cause of the death as people in rural and tea garden areas used to eat the carcasses."

"Anyway, we have started extensive vaccination in the areas from where the death of pigs has been reported," Dr Gogoi added.

"There are more than 85,000 pigs in the entire dis-

trict. But, we have received only 1500 samples of vaccine. So, we have now started the vaccination in the infected areas only," Dr Gogoi further said.

In a bid to dispel fear and misconception that the pigs infected with swine fever might cause swine flu in humans, Dr Gogoi said that the infecting viruses for both the diseases were different and the Veterinary department was also simultaneously carrying out mass awareness programme to allay peoples' fears and advising the farmers to follow vaccination rules.

Masks sale centre opened at Nalbari town

CORRESPONDENT

NALBARI, April 23: In order to meet the increasing demand for masks, the Nalbari district administration today opened a mask sale centre at the premises of Nalbari Zila Parishad premises. Deputy Commissioner of Nalbari Bharat Bhusan Dev Choudhury formally inaugurated the mask sale centre in a brief function.

As the Central government has made wearing of masks in public places compulsory, the demand for mask is gradually increasing. The district administration so far has prepared 13,680 masks made of cloth, specifically from *gamusa* by 38 women SHGs under the National Rural Livelihood Mission.

It may be mentioned here that the women made the masks within 12 days. They also plan to make one lakh masks if the situation demands.

The inaugural programme was attended, among others, by Nitul Deka, Chairman of Nalbari Zila Parishad, Krishna Baruah, chief executive officer of Nalbari Zila Parishad and Chandan Talukdar, project manager, NRLM.

Sonowal visits Chirang dist

CORRESPONDENT

BONGAIGAON, April 23: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal visited the JSB Civil Hospital at Chirang district headquarters Kajalgaon on Wednesday to review the preparedness of the district to fight COVID-19 during the nationwide lockdown.

The Chief Minister also held a meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office with the officials of the district and took stock of the current situation in the district. He instructed the district administration to ensure every support to poor people of the district during the ongoing lockdown.

His government has taken every step against price rise of essential items in the markets, Sonowal said.

In the evening, Agriculture Minister Atul Bora arrived at Bongaigaon and held a meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office with officials of the district to review the problems faced by farmers of the district during the lockdown period.

Minister Bora told the media in a briefing that a group of farmers in the district has been able to earn around Rs 1 crore by selling vegetables and fruits. Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal is planning to compensate those farmers who had to face loss in the lockdown period, Minister Bora said.

Local legislator and Food and Civil Supply Minister Phani Bhushan Choudhury was also present with Minister Bora today.

FTP till 2023 set for revamp

DUBAI, April 23: The ICC Chief Executives on Thursday unanimously agreed on a revamp of its Futures Tours and Programmes till 2023 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that has brought the world to a grinding halt.

The CEC meeting, held via tele-conference, decided that a decision on the World Test Championship and the proposed ODI league, scheduled in June, can be taken at a later date.

"There was agreement that the disrupted FTP programme would need to be collectively reviewed through to 2023 with a view to rescheduling as much of the cricket that has been postponed due to COVID-19 as possible," the ICC said in a statement.

Already, England's tour of Sri Lanka stands postponed along with Australia's tour of New Zealand. Pakistan and West Indies' tours during the English summer also look to be in serious doubt.

It was also learnt that contingency plans are being made for the T20 World Cup in Australia, scheduled for October and November.

"The CEC was updated on the continuing contingency planning for all ICC global events, including the ICC men's T20 World Cup 2020 and the ICC women's Cricket World Cup 2021.

"Planning for both events as currently scheduled is ongoing," - PTI

Murray 'would play' French Open, if it goes ahead

PARIS, April 23: Andy Murray has said that he would "definitely" play in the rescheduled French Open in September, if it is able to take place as planned.

The tennis season has been shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic since last month and will not resume until mid-July at the earliest.

Wimbledon has been cancelled and Roland Garros organisers controversially moved the French Open until September 20-October 4, starting just a week after the end of the US Open, from its usual start date in May.

"I'd definitely play on the clay, if it goes ahead," former world number one Murray told CNN.

"I'm a bit sceptical whether it will. I would imagine tennis would be one of the last sports to get back to normality because you've obviously got players, coaches and teams coming from all over the world into one area.

"I'd be surprised if they're back playing sport by September time, but we'll see."

Murray had been due to return from a hip injury at the Miami Open last month.

The 32-year-old Scot had considered retiring before surgery allowed him to make an initial comeback from injury last year, winning his first ATP title since 2017 in Antwerp last October.

"I was training to get ready for that and that was going to be a good test. I was fit and feeling pretty strong," Murray, currently ranked 129th in the world, said.

Tennis chiefs said this week they were launching a relief programme to be launched to help lower-ranked players financially during the lockdown.

"Players ranked 250-300 in the world, it's going to be really, really challenging for them," added three-time Grand Slam champion Murray.

"And I think in the last few years, there has been some improvements and some changes, but probably not enough." - AFP

In hindsight, I probably didn't need to pull out of IPL: Woakes

LONDON, April 23: England all-rounder Chris Woakes has revealed that he pulled out of this year's IPL primarily to be with his pregnant wife but need not have officially announced his withdrawal from the event, which was suspended indefinitely due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Woakes was bought for Rs 1.5 crore by Delhi Capitals at the IPL auction last year, but pulled out of the tournament saying that he wanted to stay fresh for England's home Test summer, which is also currently on hold due to the pandemic.

"In hindsight I probably didn't need to pull out. I didn't say it at the time but we're expecting another baby in September and that added to the decision," Woakes was quoted as saying by 'The Cricketer'.

"My wife wasn't well at home. The idea of being away from home for three months was going to be too much. Family had to come first," he said.

Woakes, who has not played a T20 since August 2018, and featured in a



T20I for England in November 2015, insisted he is not finished playing the shortest format of the game.

"By no means do I feel like I'm finished in T20. I'd still love to play in the

IPL," he said.

The 31-year-old, who has represented England in 33 Tests and 101 ODIs, insisted that national duty takes top priority but he is open to playing other tournaments.

"I want to play as much cricket as I can moving forward while looking after my body. My England career is No. 1 but if opportunities come up, I'd still like to play in them."

Talking about the T20 World Cup scheduled in October-November in Australia, Woakes said it was unlikely that he would make the squad.

"At the minute it doesn't quite look like I'm going to get a go in T20 unless something drastic happens in terms of injuries."

The right-arm pacer said he would be open to playing in an empty stadium without fans to get the international game back up and running.

"At least give the public something to watch and hopefully entertain some who are missing it a lot," he said. - PTI

Finch prepared for T20 World Cup postponement

MELBOURNE, April 23: Australia's limited-overs captain Aaron Finch feels the dreaded COVID-19 pandemic might lead to a postponement of this year's T20 World Cup by up to three months.

The T20 World Cup is scheduled in Australia from October 18 to November 15. Finch doesn't see that holding up given the current health crises affecting lakhs of people worldwide.

"I think we might have to get our heads around a T20 World Cup that might be postponed for a month, two months, three months, whatever it has to be," Finch told 'SEN Radio'.

Finch said he wouldn't mind seeing the game resuming without fans once the pandemic is brought under control.

"But as long as we can get live sport up and running. Whether that's with crowds or not, I don't think that makes any difference to the players.

"We played one ODI against New Zealand with no crowd and it was really strange for first four or five overs, but then you got into your work," he said.

Apart from the T20 World Cup, Australia is also set to host India for a bilateral series which includes a four-Test rubber.



The ICC's Chief Executives Committee (CEC) is meeting on Thursday to discuss the financial implications of COVID-19 and also the contingency planning for all ICC global events, including the T20 World Cup, over a conference call. Finch feels authorities will need to be "creative" while rejigging the international schedule. "I think we might have to get a little bit creative with how we do that (as part of a new-look schedule). Whether that's setting up and playing two Test matches in one hub or something like that," he said. - PTI

Boards cannot survive for long without resuming cricket: Ramiz



KARACHI, April 23: Former Pakistan captain-turned-commentator Ramiz Raja believes boards cannot survive for long without resuming cricket and urged the PCB to hold talks with other associations to find a way to play the sport behind closed doors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit sports hard with Cricket Australia forced to stand down almost

80 per cent of its staff.

The fast-spreading disease has halted all cricket activities across the globe, putting under threat this year's T20 World Cup and also indefinitely suspending the 13th IPL.

"Cricket fans are starved now and the coronavirus pandemic has brought life to a standstill but I don't think cricket boards can survive for long like this. They can't continue to pay out salaries and expenses without having cricket activities it would be disastrous for them," Ramiz said in his Youtube channel.

"I would also urge the Pakistan Cricket Board to think on these lines and hold talks with other boards to see how cricket activities can be resumed even behind closed doors."

The coronavirus outbreak has forced countries to go under lockdown to contain the disease, which has so far infected over 2.5 million people globally.

The former Test opener said it would be a disaster if this lockdown continues for long.

"Unless a vaccine can be created, we can only defeat it through social distancing and precautionary measures," he said. - PTI

Anderson, Broad set Ashes target

LONDON, April 23: England pace bowlers James Anderson and Stuart Broad have set their sights on a final Ashes series in Australia before they consider retirement.

Anderson and Broad are first and second respectively in England's list of all-time Test wicket-takers, but both are entering the twilight of their careers.

Anderson is 37 and has endured a series of injury problems over the last 12 months.

Although Broad is four years younger than Anderson, he believes his career will not last as long as his fellow pacer.

With the end in sight, both are eager to keep their England places long enough for a memorable farewell Ashes series in Australia in 2021/22.

When asked by Anderson for his retirement plans during an Instagram Live Q&A, Broad said: "I don't think I could go until your age. Your action's so smooth, it looks a lot calmer on your body whereas mine is a little more forceful through my body I think." - AFP

German football outlines plan for May return

BERLIN, April 23: The German football league is set to announce plans on Thursday for the Bundesliga to restart without spectators in the first half of May, but a move hailed as a welcome return to normality by some is meeting opposition from some scientists and fans.

The Bundesliga would be the first major European league to restart, potentially making it the focus of sports fans starved of action across the world.

Germany has been less affected by the coronavirus pandemic than other European countries, partly due to mass testing.

That situation has allowed the leaders of

the powerful states of Bavaria - home to reigning German champions Bayern Munich - and the football hotbed state of North-Rhine Westphalia to back football's resumption, albeit in empty stadiums.

But the move to allow players back onto the pitch is being treated with caution.

Bavaria state leader Markus Soeder made it clear that football will not be given a "blank cheque" to continue at a time of competing funding priorities, and the situation will be constantly reviewed.

"I can imagine that things will develop from one match day to the next," he said. - AFP

Windies cricketers not paid match fees since January

NEW DELHI, April 23: Cricketers in the West Indies have not been paid their match fees since January this year due to a severe cash crunch in their governing body.

While the players' retainers has been cleared, Cricket West Indies (CWI) has admitted the non-payment of match fees.

"...monthly salary (and allowances) are up-to-date. The problem we are having is the retained players in the regional first-class competition have not been paid their match fees for the eight rounds that have been played so far," Wayne Lewis, the secretary of the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA), was quoted as saying by 'ESPNCricinfo'.

The report stated that men's team has not been paid match fee for the home series against Ireland in January (three ODIs and three T20Is) and the Sri Lanka tour in February-March (three ODIs and two T20Is). - PTI

Economies of sport will be affected the most by this pandemic: Bindra

NEW DELHI, April 23: The entrepreneur in Abhinav Bindra reckons the economies of sport will take a beating by the time the coronavirus ceases to spread its ugly tentacles, leaving the athletes in an uncertain world full of challenges.


The champion athlete in him sees sport playing a "large role" on the other side of the pandemic, healing the wounds of a world ravaged by its seismic effects.

"The economies of sport will be affected the most, with many associations and athletes underfunded due to lack of events over this time," Olympic champion Bindra told PTI.

"This will be one of the key challenges that will need to be overcome, to ensure that athletes have the means and support to continue practising." Sport has in the past helped

the world in coping with wars and natural disasters. Quite like its role in the aftermath of the second World War, sport can again play a positive role but only after people have attained a semblance of stability, the champion shooter said.

"Yes. Sport does have the power to transcend borders, and certainly capture the imagination of millions across the world." - PTI



COVID-19 CRISIS

Ministry of AYUSH recommendations, based on Ayurvedic literature & scientific publications, for preventive health measures and boosting immunity with special reference to respiratory health.

Measures for Enhancing Immunity

- Drink warm water throughout the day.
- Daily practice of Yogasana, Pranayama and Meditation for at least 30 minutes.
- Spices like Haldi (Turmeric), Jeera (Cumin), Dhaniya (Coriander), and Lahsun (Garlic) recommended in cooking.

Ayurvedic Immunity Enhancing Tips

- Take Chyavanprash 10gm (1tsf) in the morning. Diabetics should take sugar free Chyavanprash.
- Drink Herbal Tea/Decoction (Kadha) made from Tulsi (Basil), Dalchini (Cinnamon), Kalimirch (Black Pepper), Shunthi (Dry Ginger) and Munakka (Raisin) - once or twice a day. Add jaggery (natural sugar) and/or fresh lemon juice to your taste, if needed.
- Golden Milk - half teaspoon Haldi (Turmeric) powder in 150ml Hot Milk - once or twice a day.

Immunity Boosting Measures for Self-Care

Simple Ayurvedic Procedures

- **Nasal Application** - Apply Sesame Oil/Coconut oil or Ghee in both the nostrils (Pratimarsh Nasya) in the morning and evening.
- **Oil Pulling Therapy** - Take 1 tablespoon Sesame or Coconut Oil in mouth. Do not drink, swish in the mouth for 2 to 3 minutes and spit it off followed by warm water rinse. This can be done once or twice a day.

Actions During Dry Cough/Sore Throat

- Steam inhalation with fresh Pudina (Mint) leaves or Ajwain (Caraway Seeds) can be practiced once in a day.
- Lavang (Clove) powder mixed with Natural Sugar/Honey can be taken 2-3 times a day in case of cough or throat irritation
- These measures generally treat normal dry cough and sore throat. However, it is best to consult doctors if these symptoms persist.

Issued in public interest by
Directorate of AYUSH, Assam
Banphul Nagar Path, Dispur, Guwahati - 06